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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

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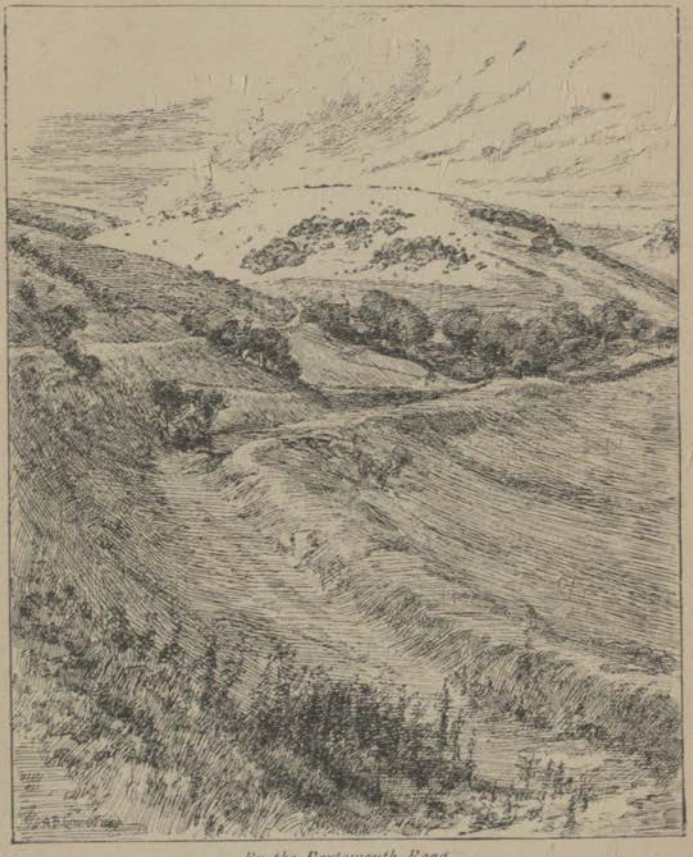

By the Portsmouth Road.

Highways and Byways

IN

Hampshire

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BY D. H. MOUTRAY READ
WITH . ILLUSTRATIONS . BY
ARTHUR B. CONNOR

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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PREFACE

LET it be said at the outset this book is merely an introduction to Hampshire. It does not aspire to be either a guide book or a history of the county. Infinitely more has been left out than is even remotely referred to, nor, with one exception, can any rule or method be claimed for my gossip. Hampshire to me is a bundle of memories, all colourful, and few but have a setting of sun-washed landscapes, sweet scents, and bird melodies. This is only the said bundle with notes and impressions of many happy days, motoring, driving, cycling, walking, in a county that I love entirely. For practical purposes they are strung together on a more or less definite route—from Southampton to Silchester, then westwards by Andover, south to the Forest, along the coast and north again up the eastern half of the county. The exception that proves the rule, or rather the lack of it, was to admit reference only to those of Hampshire's "worthies" who have joined the Great Majority. So there is no mention of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's school days at Southsea, and the Portsmouth chapter had also to face the loss of any notes concerning Sir A. Conan Doyle or Mr. George Meredith. For lack of space also, and not for any lack of appreciation, the New Forest is barely touched on, and the Isle of Wight entirely left out. To deal with them in less than a volume would be a difficult and, withal, a thankless task.

"Everything has been written about Hampshire that can be

written," one well-known local writer told me. It is therefore singular good fortune that, thanks to the kindness of many friends in the county, a few items that were not included in his "everything" have been available for this volume. Especially must I mention my indebtedness to Sir William Portal, Bart., for permission to use Lord Charles Wellesley's account of the last hours of the Duke of Wellington as furnished to the late Melville Portal, Esq., of Laverstoke. The late Rev. P. W. N. Gaisford Bourne, D.D., gave me a note on the Preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers at North Baddesley, based on more recent information than was available when he contributed a chapter on that subject to *Memorials of Old Hampshire*. My thanks are due to W. Dale, Esq., F.S.A., Hon. Sec. of the Hampshire Field Club, for permission to make use of the *Proceedings* of the Club; to Alderman Jacob of Winchester for photographs of the old city customal and much valuable information; to the Rev. R. S. Medlicott and Mr. Saunders for help about municipal Portsmouth, and to Lady Hughes, Capt. A. Everett, R.N., and Lieut. the Hon. Lionel Forbes-Sempill for facilities and information anent the dockyard and naval matters.

It is impossible to mention everyone who holds me debtor for help and kindness. Lady Ritchie, Col. F. Rowan Hamilton, Canon Braithwaite, Canon Vaughan, the Rev. D. W. Chute, the Rev. E. T. Coles, the Rev. J. E. Kelsall, the Rev. E. L. Hopkins, the Rev. R. Errington, the Rev. J. Cooke Yarborough, the Rev. S. Udney, the Rev. G. Pearson, F. C. Abdy Williams, Esq., Henry Hill, Esq., Dr. Curtis, Miss Anderson Morshead, H. P. K. Skipton, Esq., Miss C. S. Burne, Editor of *The Folk Lore Journal*, and very many other friends gave information and help. Special thanks are due to Sir William Portal, Col. H. B. Nicholls, C.B., Capt. R. Bentinck, the Rev. H. W. Yorke, H. W. Trinder, Esq., and Alderman Jacob for reading proofs; and above all to the long-suffering friend who read the whole book through in MS.

As regards literature, most of the standard authorities on the

county's history have been consulted and made use of, such as Woodward and Wilkes, Milner, Gilbert White, Warner, Gilpin, Moody, Clutterbuck, the *Victoria County History of Hampshire*, Vols I. and II. Godwin's *Civil War in Hampshire*, Baigent and Millard's *History of Basingstoke*, etc., etc., and others mentioned in the text.

One word more and I have done. Most writers claim for their " copy-hold " that it is the choicest bit of our choice Homeland. This is a praiseworthy attitude. But not on this account, nor with any desire to cast aspersions on my fellow writers do I assert that Hampshire is *the* most perfect of English counties, and the most representative corner of England! Nor is proof of this far to seek. Not even Kent can claim a greater share in the making of England, and proud London herself bends courteous head to Winton her sister city, and grants her precedence as the earliest municipality, even though the charters on which to base the claim be lost. Portsmouth as a naval station holds its own against Plymouth and Devonport, while Southampton Water challenges the Mersey and old Father Thames himself for commercial facilities.

Well! we will boast no further. Let us to our gossip of bygone days and present ways in this our County of Southampton.

D. H. MOUTRAY READ.

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

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CHAPTER I

SOUTHAMPTON

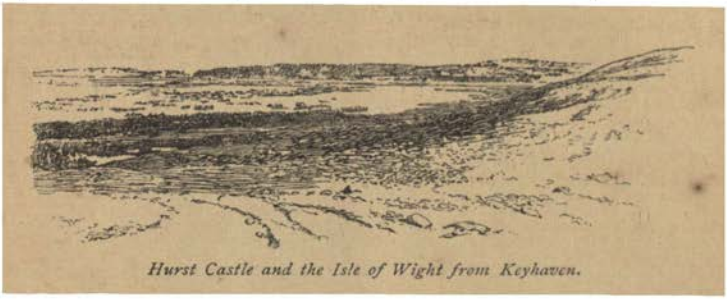
By "the long sea lane," Britain's Highway the wide world over, through Southampton, threshold of Ocean and Empire, how more fittingly may we enter Hampshire? Enter, and pause in the doing, stayed by its beauties and its memories. Southampton—the gateway to action for men, but a *via dolorosa* in many a woman's life.

Hampshire's twin rivers, Itchen and Test, that drain some of the loveliest of her scenery, and never touch alien ground, mingle their waters with the tides of the sea at an almost central point of her coastline, and on the spit of land between them, where Itchen gives his last turn seawards, the grey walls of old Southampton rise above her quays and pier to the west of her long line of docks. In a measure, Southampton is typical of the whole county. The yew-tree has been called the Hampshire weed, and its right to the name none will dispute who know the villages, hedgerows, and downs; and further, it is deserved on other counts than its abundant growth, for its very attributes are Hampshire's also. It is the hoary patriarch of the tree world, slow growing, long enduring, defying a thousand seasons, outrivalling the oak in that from its decay it puts forth fresh life, sharing with it the making of England, for its flexile

wood in the hands of English archers first won her front rank among the nations. Southampton too is old, with an age past counting, decay has sapped her again and again, death and destruction marked her for prey, beyond remediation seemingly, but like the yew, and the eagle of the Psalmist, she has renewed her youth, and to-day competes as a dangerous rival with the great commercial port of the north.

Meagre enough story have History and her sisters, Geology, Ethnology, and Archæology, to tell of the beginning of the county. Here and there in that dim ocean of the Past a headland of established Fact arises through the wreathing mists of Legend, but for the most part the drab pall of the unknown lies like deep night over the land, and many side currents must be followed up till rifts are made through the covering darkness before, if ever, one shall dare arise and say, This is Truth. Back in immeasurable ages autochthonic man lived here, for from the river drifts have been gathered his rough chipped flints, and in this neighbourhood some of the finest of paleoliths yet obtained were discovered. Geology carries Hampshire's record back to the time when all this coast country was the mouth of a big river that probably rose, we are told by the learned in such matters, among the granite heights of Devon and Cornwall, and emptied itself into the seas beyond Spithead. The floods of this river washed down the mud and sand that went to the making of the Wealden Formation, and as these turgid waters gradually subsided the waves of the sea took up the task of building their own barrier. Then when river and sea had wrought the foundations other forces played their parts; the fires below had a hand at the fashioning, and heaved up in long ridges the chalkbeds that had formed beneath the blue waters, the rain smoothed down every angle and edge, and hollowed out the coombes and dells before it made a way back to the ocean by the watersheds of Thames and Solent. Finally the sea, that snatches back to-day what he yielded yesterday, and flings away on one corner of the land what he filches from its neighbour, eat through the chalk range that ran from the Downs of Dorset to the Downs of Wight and barred his waters from the great river. And herewith we touch a problem, for it was long held that the Ictis of Diodorus was Vectis, the Isle of Wight, and in support of that theory quite recent writers have quoted a local tradition that a causeway

ran from Lepe, at the mouth of Beaulieu river, to the Island, over which carts could be driven at low tides. That such an idea exists is not to be gainsaid, and moreover it rests on nothing writ in books, no profound arguments of a rival school to that which identifies Ictis with Kent's Isle of Thanet;[1] those who believe it most unquestioningly may have heard of Thanet, but certes never of Ictis; they believe it because their fathers did, who heard it from their grandsires, and so back beyond the memory of man has the tale been handed from generation to generation. Now this is exceedingly interesting, for a tale thus authenticated must have root in some facts long since lost to knowledge. Is Mr. Elton then wrong in his deductions, and did a causeway once exist, perhaps such a shingle bar as now juts out from Keyhaven to



Hurst Castle and the Isle of Wight from Keyhaven.

Hurst Castle? If it is not too Irish a suggestion, both may be right. Mr. Elton has proved his case, and geologists have disproved the causeway if the Solent river once poured its flood north of the Island Downs, but they have further proved the ancient tales are true, though they be echoes of the dimmest of bygones, for man once might walk dryshod from Arreton Down to the magic circle of Stonehenge, only by a longer road than a causeway to Lepe!

Much of the history of Southampton is the history of her shire, and that, again, in great part is the history of England. Even to refer to most of it is beyond our compass: how successive waves of invading hosts swept up these tidal waters, and inland by the valley passes through the chalk outworks of the

[1] cf. Elton's *Origins of English History*, p. 35.

Downs, to harry and spoil, but to settle, not to exterminate. The wild warriors, however lustful of slaughter, would need maidens for wives if not youths for slaves. Of this we have proof in the words and names that have come down through the ages, homely words and names such as the women of a country best know, and woman, the conserver, saved to build into our polyglot speech. And of all this Hampshire has traces abundant. Then came the Roman with his Latin civilisation, and the rough islanders fled before the invincible discipline of his legions to the remotest forests and wild places of this their earth. The Roman drave his roads in relentless lines over the land, and pushed on till the *Pax Romana* was established in our isle. His memorials are everywhere in the county, but he, too, passed, and the sea pirates came from the Northern fjords and Wessex arose, to fall and, phœnix-like, arise anew from the ashes.

It is a great tale, endless as the lip, lip, lip of waters when the tides ebb and flow over the grass-wrack that trails above the ooze of the foreshore and gives such wonderful colours to Southampton Water. Many a time have I seen it, from the deck of a liner, from yacht or launch, from either bank, and from the Island that acts breakwater with its grim white cliffs to the south between the outer seas and these sheltered waters, and the only thing that is ever the same is my surprise. Though every line is familiar—the low, wooded shores sloping to the muddy marge, Netley Hospital's long façade amid embowering trees, the Castle tower, Fawley Beacon on the opposite shore, the long pier jutting out from Hythe, with its little ferry steamers that puff up to the Town Quay, leaving a trail of grey smoke above the reft white swirl in their wake; the lines of seagulls, circling and calling, sweeping down to the dancing water and sitting sentinel on every post; yacht and dredger, liner and tramp, fussy little tug and heavy coal barge—they are all part of the picture one expects to see spread up the long sea-arm to the grey walls of the old town and its massive docks; yet it is ever a surprise. Nor is this only because of the endless variety the vagaries of our island climate bestow in colouring and atmospheric effect: the surprise is there on a grey day, when all colour is washed out in a sad drizzle; it is there when one steals by under the mystery of night, with a glimmer of lights on either

hand, and their multifold reflections gleaming on the heaving darkness beneath; or when the bluest heaven is mirrored on an unrippled surface, and the church spires rise white above rows of villas and trees that spread away over the hills to fade into the blue-grey distance. This is Southampton, one of our great ports, where commerce holds successful and busy sway, and, withal, its setting is rest the most absolute. To have stood on a trooper's deck when the long lines of khaki-clad figures filed up from train after train on a mission of war, and looked—little enough time or thought there was for any such looking!—from the orderly disorder to the unchanged, imperturbable quiet with which it was all encircled, is to have touched the quintessence of contrast. And contrast is everywhere. Electric trams jangle past centuries-old masonry. Rows of villas, their bricks hardly set for newness, spread ever-increasing lines by and through avenues of venerable elms. From the gardens where the town children play, and where rhododendrons make a gorgeous display of blossom in their season, you may pass to the busy streets that lead to warehouses and docks, or by the old wall with its arcade and mouldering turrets; or from the cellars of thirteenth-century wine merchants, to the fo'c'sle of a German liner and its bizarre crowd of alien emigrants, of strange speech and foreign costume, chaffering by pantomime gestures with itinerant sellers. In fact, turn which way you will, an you seek contrast there is plenty yet for your finding, though modern "improvements" have done their best to sweep away the remnants of the old town. Even the Bargate was in danger when the trams were brought along the High Street—it interfered with traffic: that sufficed, it must go. *Punch* amongst others came to the rescue, the roadway was lowered, and now the trams pass under the Norman archway in the core of the thirteenth-century gateway. It is a compromise, but the Bargate has been saved, and some day the local authorities may practically apply a great Irishman's theory when it was suggested a tree that interfered with his house should be felled—he could build another house, but not grow another tree—so it is possible to make another road, as Canterbury has done by her West Gate, but never to replace the venerable Bargate, with its heraldic treasures, its stories and romances, from the lead lions to Sir Bevis himself. But perhaps the ardent advocates of *improvement* think with the Puritan poet,

Wither, about "Beavis of Hampton or such trumpery," and not with John Bunyan nor the good people of mediaeval days when "the reportes of Bevis of Southampton" were much in favour, and furnished many a blind harper and tavern minstrel with matter to "give a fit of mirth for a groat," as Puttenham tells in his *Art of English Poesie.* Puttenham was one of Queen Elizabeth's gentlemen pensioners, and wrote "a little brief romance, or historical ditty in the English tong of the Isle of Great Britaine," on the "old adventures, and valiaunces of noble knights in times past, as are those of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, Sir Bevys of Southampton, Guy of Warwicke, and others like." Both Arthur and Guy come into Hampshire's story. Bevis was son of "the good Erle Sir Gy"—Guy of Hampton, not Warwick—and that sad, bad lady—

> "The Kynge's doghter of Skotlonde
> So feire and bright."

The adventures of Bevis and his "Geaunt" Ascapart were as many and blood-curdling as the most exorbitant romancer could demand, and, of course, he was buried—whatever the legends of Arundel Castle, where his sword Mortglai is treasured, say to the contrary—under Bevis Mount with his faithful Josian, the fair "heatheness" who fled with him to Christendom after a series of wild doings and hair-breadth escapes. But in municipal Southampton there is no trace, alas! of the spirit that inspired the Manx farmer fifty years ago to offer a heifer in sacrifice when he ploughed into a tumulus. Bevis Mount is now but a name; yet a name connected in the eighteenth century with the brightest galaxy of wit and talent when the "romantic cottage" of the eccentric Lord Peterborough stood there. The witty Mrs. Montagu wrote to her friend the Duchess of Portland:—

> "Bevis Mount is the most delightful place I ever saw, the house bad and tumbling down, but there is a summer-house in the garden, such a one! From thence there is a prospect of the sea, the Isle of Wight, New Forest, and town of Southampton, the garden is laid out with an elegant taste, and in short everything that is agreeable, but particularly the Mistress."[1]

This was Peterborough's second countess, better known as

[1] cf. *Elizabeth Montagu, the Queen of the Blue Stockings.*

the prima donna Anastasia Robinson. On the occasion of another visit, Mrs. Montagu mentions a room where—

"Pope used to write, and I imagine he wrote his 'Universal Prayer' there. . . . There is a little recess in the wood where he used to study, and here perhaps he meditated his satires."

But to tell of the visits of Voltaire, Pope, Arbuthnot, Gay and Swift, only to mention five of the many notable guests at Bevis Mount, is as impossible as to spare pages to expound how the arms of Wyndham, Tylney, Cardonnel, Noel, Flemming, Newland, Paulet, Leigh and Mill came to be placed among the heraldic decorations on the north of the Bargate, or to trace the history of the lions from the time of their varnishing in 1619—they were wooden in those days—to the "lions sejant, cast in lead," that Sir Henry Englefield mentions in his *Walk through Southampton*, in 1801. Nor can we loiter in the old Guildhall over the gateway, but must pass on, with a smile at the absurdity of George the Third masquerading as a Roman emperor in the niche on the south side that once held his kinswoman and predecessor, Anne. The picture of Queen Bess was removed from the north side before 1665, when the Royal arms were placed there.

Above Bar the street becomes more and more modern, but Bargate Street leads westwards to Arundel Tower and the glory of Southampton, the grand old walls. In Norman times the castle stood to the south of Catchcold Tower. "Most beautiful" it was when the local historian and cartographer, "painful Master Speed," knew it, and Leland considered "the Glorie of the Castelle" was the keep, or, as he called it, "the Dungeons, thas is both larg, fair, and very stronge, both by Worke and the Site of it." However, it was allowed to go to ruin at the commencement of the seventeenth century, and in 1618 James I sold the site for two thousand and seventy-eight pounds *and* a penny farthing! At the beginning of the last century what remained of the old castle grounds and walls were sold to Lord Wycombe, the Marquis of Lansdowne—

"Known for his morals in each seaport town."

He erected an elaborate brick and stucco castle, the "fantastic edifice, too large for the space in which it stood, though too small to accord with its castellated style," mentioned in

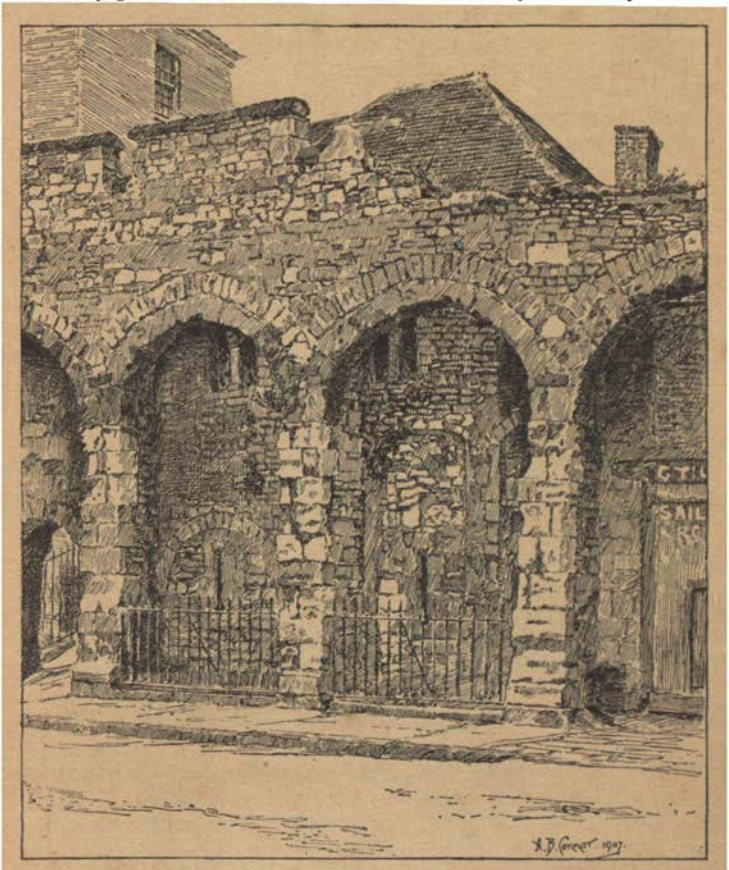
Mr. Austin Leigh's *Memoir of Jane Austen*, for in a corner house of Castle Square, with "a pleasant garden, bounded on one side by the old city walls," the quiet Hampshire girl, whose pen has placed her among the great ones of her county, spent four uneventful years after her father's death. But though she watched Lady Lansdowne's pony phaeton with much amusement, and walked on the walls against which the sea washed at high tides, there is no word of the old town in any of Miss Austen's work. At that time Fortune, the fickle jade, was still smiling on Southampton: visitors had not ceased to crowd to the West Quay and Martin's Baths, the Spa, the theatre and the libraries; there were assemblies at the old Dolphin and summer balls at the Long Rooms, skating "in the meadows by the beach" in frosty winters, as Jane wrote to her sister Cassandra, and archery at Archers' Lodge near the Avenue, popular because "it is one of the few sports that ladies can join in"! Martin's Rooms and the nerves of his fashionable clients doomed a portion of the old wall; as three of the towers above the Arcades were pulled down by his request in 1775 for fear of accidents.

The beautiful embattled Arcade is noted by every writer as unique. The fourteenth-century arches set against the old Norman masonry are mementoes of Southampton's blackest day of trial and shame, the French raid of 1338. The good folk of the town were at Mass one Sunday morning in October, the bad were presumably either non-existent or asleep, for up Southampton Water to the Gravels swept a fleet of foreign galleys, from Normandy and Picardy, Genoa and Spain: then—

> "Came the gaylayes unto land,
> And ful fast thai slogh and brend."

Minot, the Edwardian poet, made the best case he could for the townsfolk, but even at the best the tale reads ill; there was harrying and hanging, fire and, sad to say, flight. Thereafter to strengthen the walls they were masked with these machicolated arches, and a temporary barbican of wood was erected, which was replaced with masonry later. Speed notes "that it was an ancient custom for the lightermen of the town to bring yearly their lighter-loads of stones to lie between the piles or town walls," and the Hythe boatmen had either to do likewise or pay fourpence whenever they landed goods or

passengers. Indeed, the upkeep of the defences was a very serious matter for the townsfolk, woefully affecting their purses, as many petitions for relief show, but direfully necessary none



The Arcade.

the less, for during the French war Southampton had many days of fighting and nights of alarm, especially before the battle of Sluys gave England command of the seas and made

possible the victories of Creçy and Agincourt, even as Nelson's victories led the way to Wellington's triumphs. Agincourt was of particular interest to dwellers in the town, for from Hampton Henry V. sailed to a "fair and lucky war" against their mortal enemies the French? It was at this time that Cambridge, Scrope, and Grey had "lightly conspir'd" against him as Shakespeare tells. For which "damned enterprise" a Southampton jury tried Sir Thomas Grey, and he was promptly beheaded outside the North Gate, while a few days later the Earl of Cambridge and Lord Scrope of Masham, after judgment by their peers, paid in like manner for their treason. Tradition places the scene of the trial at the Red Lion. But before leaving the Arcades let us turn up through Blue Anchor Postern to the ancient buildings, one of which, on the south side, is known as King John's Palace. The flat projection on four corbels just beyond the double window is the chimney of the old fireplace, and you may go far to find others of so early a date as this and one at Christchurch. The rough chestnut beams of the roof were probably there when John on one of his many visits may have stayed in this building instead of the castle. Some authorities consider it to be the oldest house in England, for the remains of another ancient building known as Canute's Palace are, they decree, of later date. Sir Henry Englefield first connected it with the old Dane, and though the window arches are of later Norman work, some of the wall in Porter's Lane may be Saxon masonry, and if so stood in days more direful even than when Barbenoire's galleys raided the town, for much fighting had the Hampshire fyrd to do in defence of Hampton when—

> "Warriors over the
> Weltering waters
> Borne in the bark's bosom
> Drew to this island."

The Saga tells how Olaf the Norseman came to winter at Southampton, and that romantic adventurer so charmed the widowed Gyda, sister to the King of Dublin, that her suitor Alfin challenged him to mortal combat, wherein Olaf won the fair. In accordance with treaty made to the Saxon king and promise given to Bishop Alphege, Olaf came to harry the coastlands no more, but Sweyn, his brother-in-law, returned to carry

fire and sword, terror and slaughter up the Itchen valley to the ecclesiastical city itself. It was in consequence of this raiding that the feckless Ethelred instigated the general massacre of Danes on the feast of St. Brice, that fatal day in mid-November 1002. Fatal indeed, for the next year brought revengeful hosts under Sweyn and Canute; Southampton was sacked and all South Hampshire suffered. Good came from the evil, Ethelred was no loss to Wessex; Canute as ruler a decided gain. There are those who cast doubt on the episode of the Danish king rebuking his too fulsome courtiers with the dramatic sermon on the seashore, and other pilferers would fain prove the scene had setting on the banks of Thames instead of here. Hampshire knows better!

A bounty of Nature's bestowing secured Southampton's commercial position. She is, as Bede noted, one of the few good ports with a double high tide. There is a double or prolonged high water, for, when the water has risen to what may be considered as the *first* or proper high water, it then remains at practically the same height for upwards of two hours, an advantage of great importance in the docking of vessels, or bringing them alongside the quays.[1] Besides this, the Itchen provided a waterway to the Wessex capital, so that from the earliest days trade has been one of the chief features of the town. The Guild Merchant was an immemorial institution, and to the guildsmen or burgesses Richard I granted freedom "from toll, passage, and pontage, both by land and water, both in fairs and markets, and from all merchantile custom in all parts of the King's dominions both on this and the other side of the sea." His father gave them the earliest charter among the extant borough records, and his brother made over "the town of Southampton to farm for ever, with the port of Portesmues" to the burgesses in 1199. Already the wine trade had increased greatly since the marriage of Henry II and Eleanor of Anjou introduced the vintages of Bordeaux, and some

[1] After low water the tide rises steadily for about 2 hours, then remains stationary or nearly so for about 1 hour, it then rises again for 3½ hours, and thus at 6½ hours after low water it has risen to the *first* high water; it then ebbs for 1 hour falling about 9 inches, when it again commences to rise, and in about 1¼ hours reaches its former level and sometimes higher. The ebb continues 3¼ hours and falls most rapidly 2 hours after the *second* high water. At neaps there is no difference in the level near high water. Springs rise 13 ft., neaps 9½ ft.

of the old vaulted cellars yet remain, the most notable being the finely groined Undercroft in Simnel Street. The wool trade in the thirteenth century was distinctly important, for Southampton was one of the eight towns from which alone wool might be exported, and the custody of tronage and pesage was a coveted office. In 1378 "all merchants of Genoa, Venice, Catalonia, Arragon, and of other kingdoms, lands, and countries lying westward, being at peace with our Lord the King," might bring their "carracks, ships, and gallies" to trade for "wool, hides, wool-fells, lead, tin, and other staple commodities." But trade fluctuated, there were bad times in Tudor days, and a paper

Southampton from the Western Shore.

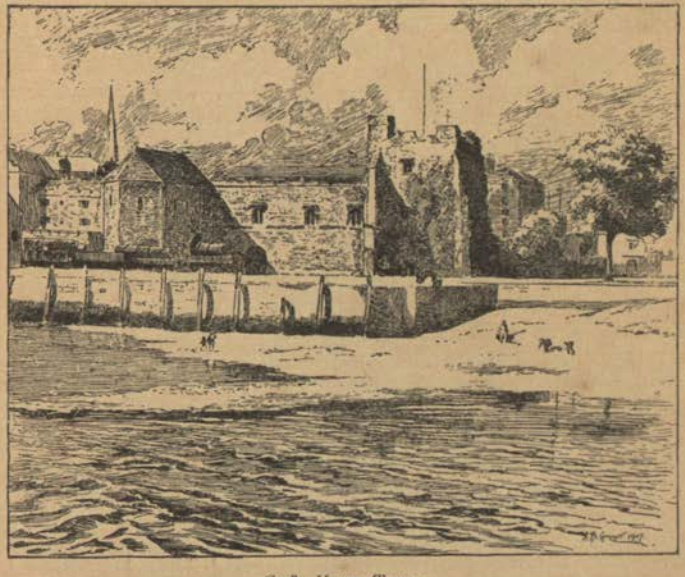
written by Edward VI set forth a scheme for a five weeks' free mart every summer to attract trade from abroad. It was never carried out, but the failing commerce was in part revived by a grant from Queen Mary of the sole right to land "malmseys and sweet wines" from the Levant, till the Turkey Company obtained the right of all trade there. So by the eighteenth century—

> ". . . . Hampton, in the days of yore,
> The lawful pride of all the southern shore,"[1]

had become, the local poet is forced to own, "poor and dull like other places." Something the town gained meanwhile in

[1] Dr. Speed, *Batt-upon-Batt.*

improved manufactures by the settlement of many refugees, victims of religious persecution in France and the Low Countries when the Widow Scarron leagued with the Chancellor and Louvois to molest those encouraged by the hated Colbert, though the Grand Monarque owed as much of his kingdom's prosperity to that dead statesman as to his own perspicacity. When Louis was persuaded to uproot for all time heterodox tenets and coerce his Huguenot subjects even to their smiting, as Samson



God's House Tower.

did the Philistines, "hip and thigh with a great slaughter," these efforts, however they may have tended to the spiritual benefit of his realm, resulted in grave detriment to its material prosperity.

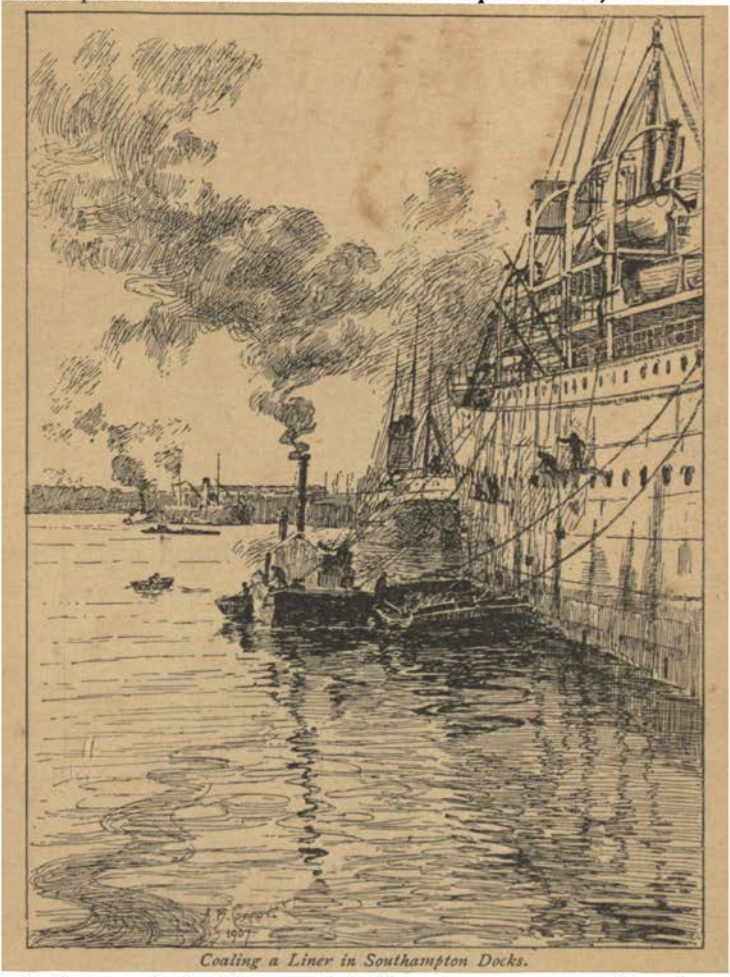
The old Maison Dieu or Hospital of St. Julian, better known as God's House, was founded by Gervase le Riche and the burgesses of Southampton towards the end of the twelfth century, possibly in connection with the pilgrimages to Canterbury

then commencing, for there was already a lazar-house, Le Maudeleyne, of which only the name corrupted to Marland survives; the Winchester road runs over the site. This Hospital of St. Mary Magdalene was given by Edward III to the Priory of St. Denis, after much disputing between the Crown, the burgesses, and the Bishop over the nomination of the wardens. In the end the quarrel ousted the charity and by the fifteenth century all pretence of maintaining it ceased. Over St. Julian's Hospital also there was strife between rival powers. These squabbles occupied the energies and monopolised the interests of the authorities to the detriment of the charity, which suffered also from the appointment of non-resident wardens. In 1343 the hospital was given to Queen's Hall on condition that the original foundation was maintained, and they would seem to have well fulfilled the trust, enriched by Edward IV with the endowment of Sherborne Priory. Portions of the spur-work and tower at the south-eastern angle, beyond the Watergate which gives entrance from the Town Quay to the High Street or Below Bar, date from the early fifteenth century, and probably were built in consequence of the French raids, during one of which St. Julian's was burnt. The building was a quadrangle with a chapel on the south by the gate tower, but in 1861 the old buildings were demolished, the gateway "renewed," and the chapel modernised, until to-day only the chancel arch remains of the little church where the Walloons and Huguenots were permitted, by favour of Queen Elizabeth, to hold their own services. Their petition in 1567 to the municipal authorities records furthermore that, "Shee appointed us unto this your towne where we should freely and peaceably make our abode and quietly exercise merchandising." The emigrants marked their gratitude when the Queen visited the port by waiting outside the town for an opportunity to express their prayerful thanks, to which she replied, "*que les prieres desdit seruoyent beaucoup à sa conseruation.*" The records of this community are the oldest of any Huguenot settlement in England: written "in somewhat archaic and quaint French," notes a descendant of one refugee, they are of great interest, not only as a record of the emigrant families, but for notices of current events such as St. Bartholomew, "*ong horible masacre et sacre,*" or the Great Plague, which was sad business for Southampton when it

spread hither. Very terrible were the sufferings of those who could not flee from the infected town; all shunned it, and the uttermost destitution prevailed; the clergy deserted their posts, with the exception of the Huguenot pastor, and the town books have many harrowing notices of those mournful times. Plague had visited the town before, Saxon chroniclers tell of peril by flood, by lightning, and by pestilence; there were other outbreaks, but none so terrible as that of 1665. The town did not recover from its effects, following on the gradual loss of trade, till a century later. Then, behold Southampton in a new *rôle*—a fashionable watering-place! Its present prosperity dates from the decision to improve the quays and wharves at the beginning of the last century. Soon after this the coaches, though the best of their kind, were superseded by the railroad, and although figures are worrying things, except to specially constructed brains, and statistics may prove nothing or anything—old Hampshire, by the by, held numberings in suspicion, and was as convinced that the census returns caused scarcity and sickness as my own country was that they brought about the Famine—yet a few figures may be admitted as the briefest way of noting the town's progress. At the end of the sixteenth century the population numbered 4,200, of whom 297 were aliens: in 1780 there were not 400 houses liable to the window tax, and at the beginning of the last century there were 1,582 houses with a population of 7,913: the 1901 return gives a population of 104,824; and judging from the rapidity with which row upon row of slate and brick ugliness encroaches yearly nearer to the Forest, into Itchen's meadows, and over the homely, hilly countryside to the east, if that abominable tax were again introduced the Chancellor of the Exchequer might be able to indulge promptly in Old Age Pensions, Paid Members, and other eccentricities!

One might go on indefinitely wandering round Southampton's streets and corners, there is so much to remember, and many a good tale or romance to recall: the docks and their manifold interests, the busy wharves, trains and shipping, freight and passengers, stacks of timber, warehouses piled with bales, an ever shifting scene: the gradual return of prosperity—there were but 13 ships, not counting coasters, connected with the port at the end of the eighteenth century, now there are more than as many shipping companies! The coming of the P. & O.

liners opened a new phase in life to Southampton. Officials came perforce to live where their duties required them, and old



Coaling a Liner in Southampton Docks.

Indians, retired officers and civilians, in part attracted by the mildness of the climate, in part by convenience, settled in the

vicinity, till the streets grew more gay than they had been since the fashionable world deserted the town for newer watering places and foreign spas; but when the Company left the old depression threatened to settle once more on the emptier streets. However, the day of failure is not yet; if the P. & O. departed other lines came. Then there are many more odd corners connected with the mercantile history of the port, as the ancient building, with solid rounded buttresses, at the end of Bugle Street, known as the Spanish prison or Woolhouse. The first title is not derived from its fine Spanish chestnut roof, but because this fourteenth-century "weyhous" or "wolhous" was used for a prison during the wars with France and Spain. Prisoners were also kept on cartels in the harbour. It was a busy time for the port with continual embarkations from the quays, coming and going of transports, despatching of stores, and sad arrivals of wounded and prisoners. There were encampments on Netley and Shirley Commons, troops were quartered in the town as well as in the neighbouring villages; and French loyalists and foreign legions filled the new barracks.

During the turmoil of the Great Rebellion, that "war without an enemy," as Sir William Waller called it, when Hampshire had her share of its mingled glories and shame, Southampton, its historian[1] tells, had a "monotony of war and discord," no out-standing events or dramatic episodes, only skirmishes in the neighbourhood, passing of rival detachments, troops billeted, and much moneys extorted; "the authorities sat loosely to the Parliamentary Cause, and, as opportunity occurred, quietly fined those who maligned the King and Queen." The King had been here more than once, and the house in High Street where he stayed, No. 17, has an elaborately carved mantel and a priest's hole behind the chimney. As for other royal visits, it would be easier to note which English sovereigns have not at sundry times been within these walls than give account of all who have. According to tradition Henry VIII stayed at the fine old black-and-white Tudor house in St. Michael's Square. He did visit the town more than once, and on one occasion took

[1] The Rev. J. Silvester Davies, to whose *History of Southampton* the writer and every student of Hampshire's history stand indebted.

active interest in the suit of one William Symonds, who wooed the Widow Cowart, successfully, thanks to King Harry's help. He also was entertained aboard the newly arrived fleet of Venetian galleys. Oliver Cromwell came to the town, where his chaplain, Nathaniel Robinson, held two livings till the Act of Uniformity deprived him of a benefice in the Church of which he was no authorised priest. He eventually became the Minister of the Dissenting Chapel.

Before this, in July, 1674, when John Milton lay a-dying, the deacon of the Independent Meeting House where, contrary to law at that period, sundry Nonconformists continued to worship after their own fashion, one Isaac Watts was, for that very contrariness, undergoing sentence of imprisonment. In the clothier's house his good lady had other things to occupy her than uninterrupted musings on her absent lord and the evil *times* in which their lot was cast, as doubtless they seemed to her, for a young Isaac made his entry into the world, whose name was to be a familiar household word for generations to come. How many children have struggled, and will yet, to master his "busy bee," and hated Isaac mortally in the doing, wishing themselves in truth "Afar in the meadows to see the young lambs" who were not plagued with any such task! But Dr. Watts is hardly treated. His name is nowadays more suggestive of mirthful skits than *Moral Songs*, yet there are few hymns in the English language better known than one poem he gave us, and none that holds more memories, for, in that old meeting-house "O God our Help in Ages Past" was originally sung from the manuscript written by the deacon's son. So Hampshire may claim of his best, though only the first volume of his poems was written and published at Southampton, and his after life does not belong to her, as he quitted his father's house when twenty-two years of age. As a matter of fact Southampton's poets are to be distinctly ranked as Minor. Sotheby published many things, but are they read nowadays? Charles Dibdin is remembered for his numerous sailor songs, and his picture hangs in the Audit Hall, where the old muniments, corporation plate, and other treasures are kept, of which, and of its municipal history, if Southampton instead of its county *in toto* was our subject, there would be much to be said. The list of Mayors dates back to 1237. Nor can we enter into the history of the squabbles between

burgesses and townsfolk over the right to elect their Parliamentary representatives, a long-drawn dispute that had its parallel in other towns of our county, and was not peculiar to Hants! The Fairs, the Commons, and the Salt Marsh have their story, as well as the town Charities, and modern buildings, the Hartley Institute, with its museum and library, a gift from the late Henry Robinson Hartley; the Ordnance Survey Office; the schools. But of ecclesiastical history and architecture Southampton has comparatively little to offer, due in great part to ruin wrought by raiders. One church, indeed, the mother church of the town, St. Mary's, was, according to Speed, demolished in the sixteenth century because its spire was too good a landmark for the French! This old building, which Leland tells was erected by "one Matilda, queen of England," is very intimately connected with our subject matter, and in a fashion certainly uncommon, for there is an order in the Court Leet Book of 1550 to cart away "so much of the rubbish of St. Mary's Church" as would be required "to make the highway from Bargate and all East Street down to the turning to the chantry"! Holy Rood kept its fourteenth-century tower when it was rebuilt in 1849, and the fabric of St. Michael's shows work of many styles from the original Norman, to which period its square font belongs one of the five celebrated black marble fonts in the county. The church was the scene of terrible doings in the raid of 1338, though it had not then the spire that is now a notable landmark. If St. Mary's paved the streets, a chantry chapel of St. Michael's was let as a dwelling-house, and became in time a barber's shop! Of the old monastic houses only a few stones three miles up the river on Itchen's bank, and the name of St. Denys remain, but before leaving the churches there is one more to note as of some interest in that it was the first consecrated after the Reformation, and the service now in use is that which was arranged for its dedication. This is Jesus Chapel on Pear Tree Green by "the great River Itchen, where the passage is very broad, and often dangerous," as Captain Richard Smith declared in his petition for leave to build the chapel. Duthy[1] quotes two lines of a long epitaph Captain Smith wrote in memory of "his most vertuous and piouslie disposed mother-in-law" that will bear repetition:—

[1] John Duthy, *Sketches of Hampshire.*

"Teach me to pen a sigh at every line,
May pickle up a mourner in the brine."

Bitterne Manor, round three sides of which the river loops, is one of the suggested sites of Clausentum. This is no place to enter into the long arguments that the plan of the defences was un-Roman in character, unless the inner wall—which is said to be Roman work of the third or fourth century—was constructed after the outer wall was abandoned; but when Northam Bridge was built ten decades and more ago, and the manor house rebuilt shortly after, much Roman work was discovered, and there is every reason to suppose that so valuable a strategic site would be occupied for defensive purposes by all who desired to keep a hold on Itchen's waterway. Another unsolved query is, Where was the Saxon town? Was it on the site of the remaining Norman buildings, as the believers in Canute's Palace would insist, or in the vicinity of St. Mary's Church, where tradition as reported by Camden and Leland places Hamtun? Another dispute exists over the site of Ad Lapidam, quite possibly the modern Stoneham, and mainly of interest as the scene of a tale Bede records about the Abbot of Reodford or Redbridge, which well shows the primitive simplicity of men's ideas in seventh-century days. Wessex was then a maze of strifes. Two royal youths who fled from the Isle of Wight when their brother, the last king of the Wight, was defeated by Cadwalla, were betrayed, and in consequence condemned to die by that warrior, then laid up with wounds, and so doubtless in the worst of tempers despite his victory. Cynebert, our abbot, interceded on their behalf that execution of the sentence should be delayed in order to allow him to instruct and baptise the heathen brothers before they were hurried out of this mortal sphere.

Redbridge lies to the west of Southampton where the Test winds its way seawards through marshy meadows and mud flats, a desolate scene when under leaden sky or a downpour of rain the wild winds whistle through the rushes and the swaying reeds thresh the ooze they rise from, especially should you see it at low tide when the waters leave the acres of muddy foreshore stripped in forlorn nakedness; stranded boats lie lopsided on the mire, the straggling green weeds have gathered ragged lines of jetsam, and the seafowl run and cry, rise on

powerful wing and sweep in circles into the grey wrack that shuts down the stagnant odours of slime; but very otherwise when the blue water dances up to the white bridge that spans the narrow inlet where the tide sweeps up to the green meadows, and the sun glitters on Test's clear waters rippling down through bending sedges. Almost forgotten in these days, Redbridge once was in its way a port of some standing, with a big timber trade and ship-building yard: now it is but an outlying suburb of Southampton, on the main road that runs west through the Forest to Dorset. You may also go there from the cross roads at the north end of Southampton Common if you turn westwards. Some good old timber borders the road by its bank of sods, but elms and thorns before summer is through are dusty and tired-looking, as though wearied in the struggle to exist in the neighbourhood of so much encroaching brick and mortar, dust and smoke. Those who seek views and scenery will find nothing better to do than to put the miles under as rapidly as the safety of the public admits until out of Southampton's suburbs, for though you may catch sight of an older bit of building, a quaintly gabled roof, or even thatch, brick-work of Anne's day or possibly earlier, besides Georgian stolid ugliness and Victorian stucco, for the most part the streets have a mushroom growth of brick villas, sufficient in themselves to show—did sight and smell not also frequently testify, that brickfields abound and the Bracklesham beds of the Hampshire Basin are rich in brick earth. The Shirleys are now but suburbs, though once, as the hilly roads and patches of woodland testify, charming country villages on the outskirts of the town. At Millbrook rows of villas cover what were country fields when my grandfather lived there, not so many decades ago, and the old church of St. Nicholas is only used as a mortuary chapel. The Scotch poet Pollok lies buried in the graveyard. He is said to have long wished to visit the "story-telling glens" of the Forest, came south with that purpose, only to die on its borders.

CHAPTER II

TO WEST OF ITCHEN

THE road from Southampton to Winchester sweeps finely up and down, once away from villa and garden rails, between rough banks where bracken and bramble flourish, and the long sprays of the briar-rose sway daintily above wild corners, or the crumbling earth falls in tiny landslips beneath matted clumps of heather. It is a good road, with no troublesome gradients to its many hills, and if the yellow gravel surface is apt to be dusty and a trifle loose after a long spell of dry weather, it is, as a rule, excellent; and when it runs by bordering oak wood, where groups of hoary yew or fir make shadow against the lightsome ash bending over hazel undergrowth, gives fair promise of the wooded scenery and spacious roadways Hampshire offers to the wayfarer.

There is an alternative road through Eastleigh and Twyford, but it has little to recommend it. Though there are no hills, neither are there any views, as railway travellers know, for road and line run alongside much of the way; it is slightly longer and narrower, and the surface cannot be depended on once Swaythling is passed, before which the country has been engulfed in modern Southampton suburbs. But a few bits of old thatch and tile work still linger, and the highroad just before it runs under the railway bridge passes a row of cottages hidden beneath a fine wistaria, with thatch cut away in deep arches over the upper windows. Beyond the Winchester road forks off, but the highway turns eastward to where through flat pastures, filled with browsing kine, the Itchen's clear stream runs bank-high between the rush-bordered grasses, lazy, silent, with scarce a ripple breaking the deep greens and

browns. This is Itchen in his honoured age, with all the peace that pertains to a sense of accomplishment! The fisher by yonder bridge, and the mill among the trees at the head of the reach, equally with the rich meadow-land, are characteristics of the beautiful river, and will be found by his banks before Itchen has counted much of his journey from source to sea.

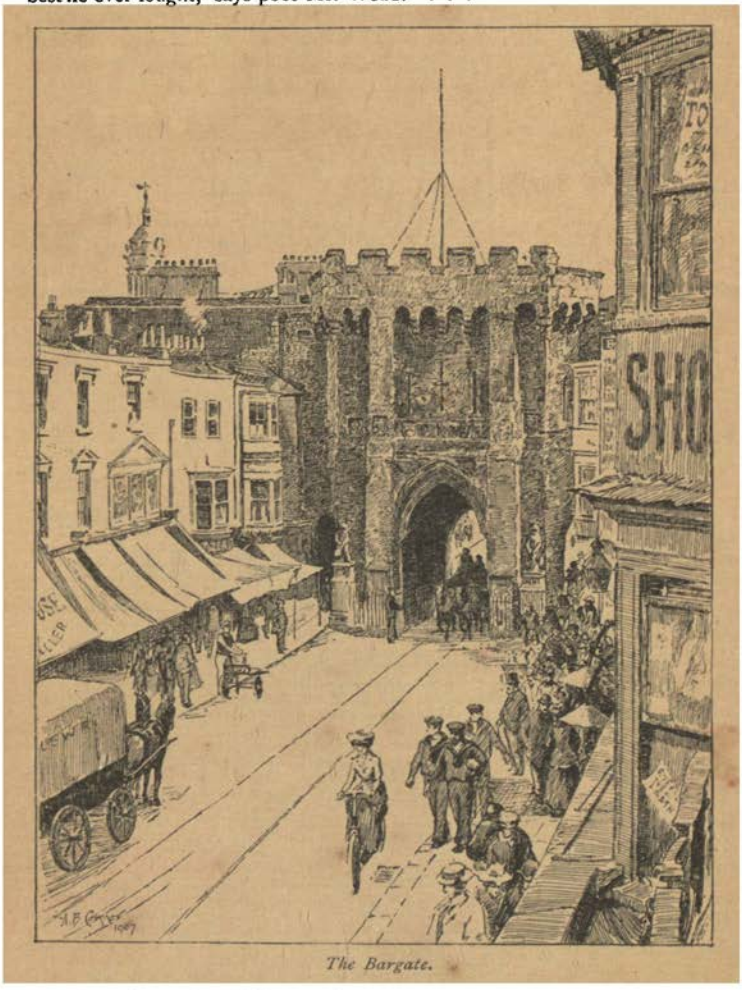
The mills at South Stoneham have a share in the county history not to be overlooked. When James II granted a charter in 1686 to the white paper makers there were five mills here, and one still exists as Mr. John Gater's corn-mill. As France was then the chief place where white paper was manufactured, the Company of White Paper Makers included on its rolls the names of many Huguenot refugees. The production of fine paper in England, which was largely in their hands, owes much to their energies; and not paper only. It is matter of common knowledge how, under Louis XIV, "*les manufactures tombaient*," and as French industries suffered from the ill-treatment meted out to the Huguenot party other countries gained, Holland and England much, South Africa not a little, the New World most of all. So Stoneham got a paper mill, and among the Huguenot members of the Company connected therewith we find the names of de Ruvigny, de Portal, Claude Bordier, Adam de Cardonnel, and Elias de Grouchy, who was Mayor of Southampton in 1682. The arms of de Cardonnel are on one of the shields on the Bargate. A burgess of the town, Adam was a big man in his day, though now he be almost forgotten: member for Southampton, Marlborough's secretary, and Secretary at War. But those who know his story will probably, with Eyre Crowe, be "quite delighted to find his meannesses justly pilloried in *Esmond's* pages,"[1] for Thackeray gives with graphic touch an instance of how things were managed under the *régime* of "Ambidextrous Churchill," after the battle of Wynendael:—

"'If I was Cadogan, I would have a peerage for this day's work,' General Webb said; 'and, Harry, thou shouldst have a regiment. . . Have you ever a hundred guineas to give Cardonnel? Slip them into his hand to-morrow, when you go to headquarters with my report.'" . . .

"'Two lines by that d—d Cardonnel, and no more, for the taking of

[1] *With Thackeray in America.*

Lille—for beating five times our number—for an action as brilliant as the best he ever fought,' says poor Mr. Webb." . . .



The Bargate.

"The *Gazette* in which Mr. Cardonnel, the Duke's secretary, gave an account of the victory of Wynendael, mentioned Mr. Webb's name, but

gave the sole praise and conduct of the action to the Duke's favourite, Mr. Cadogan." . . .

"But the matter was taken up. . . . Mr. Cardonnel offered General Webb reparation; Mr. Webb said he had a cane at the service of Mr. Cardonnel, and the only satisfaction he wanted from him was one he was not likely to get, namely, the truth."[1]

Later we are told, "Our enemy Cardonnel was turned out of the House of Commons (along with Mr. Walpole) for malversation of public money," for the Secretary was involved with the Duke in his downfall, and expelled from the House, despite his plea of custom permitting, for having well lined his pockets with bribes from the Army contractors! "The thing that hath been"!

In North Stoneham Church, a mile away between the two Winchester roads, is a puzzling memorial of probably another foreign settlement in the vicinity of Southampton. Though there is mention of a chapel here with "vestments with pearls and gems" in the days of Athelstan, there are no traces in the present building, restored in 1825–30, of earlier work than the tower, which dates from the middle of the thirteenth century; the nave may have been built a century later. The memorial is a curiously inscribed slab of grey-blue marble in the floor of the chancel, where it was moved at the restoration from what was doubtless its original position in the north aisle over the burying place of the Guild of Slavonic Merchants, as the inscription declares. This has given rise to much conjecture as to who they may have been, and what brought them to the village for burial. There are, however, evidences of Italian traders at Winchester in the fourteenth century, and when, some hundred years later, the Italian merchants in London were so persecuted by the citizens that they left in a body, Winchester was selected for their place of settlement, and the Venetian trade transferred to Southampton, a port they had long dealt with. About this time a Guild or *Scuola* of Dalmatian sailors, *Schavoni*, were granted a hospice in Venice, and very possibly they founded some such a colony here, with their own place of sepulture and worship, as the Huguenots did later at St. Julian's. There would have been good reason for their choice of this place, beyond the fact that

[1] *Esmond*, Book ii, chap. xv.

the church was dedicated to the sailors' Patron Saint Nicholas, for it lay near where the highroads meet from east to west, halfway between Southampton and Winchester.

Besides this antiquarian puzzle there are other records of bygone celebrities. Edward Holdsworth, an eighteenth-century writer, was once rector; in the register of baptisms will be found the name of the theologian Dr. Liddon; and here lies buried Admiral Lord Hawke, of the Quiberon Bay Expedition.

It scarcely needs telling how in 1759, the year when Horace Walpole declared "it was necessary to ask every morning what new victory there was for fear of missing one," Sir Edward Hawke with a fleet of sail lay off Brest, watching the French fleet under Marshal de Conflans harboured there. Bad weather drove him from his post, and gave the French commander his opportunity when a small English squadron offered chance of reprisal. But before Conflans could secure this prize Hawke effected a junction with his detachment, and, despite the danger of operations off that rocky coast in such tempestuous weather, promptly gave battle, and scorned the warning of his frightened pilot. "You have done your duty in showing me the danger, now you are to obey my orders and lay me alongside the *Soleil Royal*," was the comment of the veteran who had served with distinction under Matthews, Lestock, and Rowley, and gained his K.B. twelve years previously by defeating the French fleet and capturing six of the enemy. Such a spirit compels victory. "This defeat," as the French account hath it, "was regarded as ignominious, and the defeat was disgracefully known as the Battle of M. de Conflans." Hawke received a pension of £2,000, and lived to be Vice-Admiral of Great Britain, First Lord of the Admiralty, and a Peer of the Realm. He died at Swaythling House, since pulled down.

North Stoneham also is concerned with a shield on the Bargate, for Lord Chief Justice Sir Thomas Fleming, at one time recorder and afterwards member for Southampton, purchased the manor and was buried in the church. Lady Fleming was a Cromwell, and aunt to Oliver. Old Noll, by the way, got his daughter-in-law, as well as his chaplain, from these parts. But of that anon, for though the Flemings lived within five miles of Richard Cromwell's home, there is much yet to note ere Hursley is reached—I can but move slowly, for this is

Kipling's "amazing England," where "the dead, twelve coffin deep, clutch hold of my wheels at every turn." [1] But Eastleigh may be left, for that is simply a collection of remarkably ugly houses that have sprung up round an important railway junction; the main road does not even touch it, but runs nearly two miles away to the west of the line past Chandler's, or, as it originally was, Challoner's Ford, where Dick Cromwell brought his bride to feast in the orchards on merries, a small edition of the black Kent cherry. Now it is almost an outlying suburb of Southampton, so built over is the little valley with new villas, by pine woods hardly much older, with not half a dozen merry trees for the seeking, and fewer of the dark juicy berries on the lot, probably, than Dick and Doll found on one of their progenitors in the gardens of the old hamlet. Yet to this day if the Monk's Brook comes down in flood wheeled traffic between Chandler's Ford and Eastleigh must divert to the main road, for where the byway crosses the stream is only a foot-bridge as of yore.

From Chandler's Ford the highway trends more easterly towards the line of the old Roman road, joining it just north of the long and narrow parish of Otterbourne. This name is familiar to all as the home of a writer not yet replaced in her particular circle—Charlotte Yonge—and no better guide can be found for the vicinity than her history of *John Keble and His Parishes*, Hursley, Otterbourne, and Twyford, and *Old Times at Otterbourne*, would we know where woad "still grows in the lanes," or snowdrops and double daffodils in a dell, why the house leek must not flower on the roof, or ill-luck will befall the inhabitants; why May 29 is called "shick-shack day," and St. Thomas's Day at Otterbourne is "held as the day for 'gooding,' when each poor house-mother can demand sixpence from the well-to-do towards her Christmas dinner," and much more pleasant gossip and local tales, scattered through a careful study of the history of the country round "the little house stuffed with books and the little garden crammed with flowers"—as a sister of the quill described it—that was for so long her well-loved home. By me, as I write, are some letters in her clear and easy writing to Mr. Melville Portal, asking for data for one of her novels:—

[1] Filson Young. *The Complete Motorist*, p. 286.

"You know more than anyone else about old county matters at Winchester and I am tempted to ask you if you can tell me where to imprison my hero in the year 1696—when all I know is that the jail in Jewry Street did not exist. . . . I wonder where Lady Lisle was kept—it could hardly have been among the felons—may I put him in the Castle? And if you have a list by you, it would be well to know who was Sheriff. So near our own time, it is expedient to be tolerably correct."

In the third letter the name of the novel is mentioned:—

"I have desired Macmillan to send you my Reputed Changeling, that you may see what I did with the Prison and Castle there."

Among the big elms by the river, near the Moat House with its double staircase, the chancel of old Otterbourne Church stands under mantling ivy. Instead of restoring the original building when the railway came too close, a new church was built, mainly through Mr. Keble's efforts, half a mile away where the pretty village trails along each side of the highroad, on ground given by Magdalen College, the owners of the Otterbourne Park property. This, sold in 1279 for 600 merks and a quit-rent of gilt spoons value sixpence, nearly two hundred years later was bought from Margaret Wykeham by Bishop Waynflete for £600, to endow his Oxford College. One of the Early English arches from the old church is to be seen built into the doorway of the boys' school.

Beyond the new church are the beautiful grounds of Cranbury Park, once the seat of the Conduitts whose arms are on its famous sundial, calculated by no less a master than Sir Isaac Newton. Seven years before the aged man of science's death one of his former pupils, Jonathan Conduitt, married his half-niece and adopted daughter, Caroline Barton, celebrated for her wit and beauty. Thus did Cranbury become the home of England's great philosopher for the last years of his life. Sir Isaac is connected also with another Hampshire family, for the Conduitts' only child married a Wallop, Lord Lymington's heir, so the Newton MSS. and a portrait by Kneller are among the Portsmouth treasures at Hurstbourne Park. Cranbury was sold the year Sir Isaac died to Mr. Lee Dummer. The name of Dummer will not soon be forgotten by the good people of Winchester, for in 1770 Thomas Dummer committed an appalling crime. He purchased the City Cross to ornament his demesne! But whatever mayor,

corporation and commissioners might rule—what they did by their ill-judged and worse-effected measures has marred the old city past effacing—Winchester's citizens would not be lightly bereft of such a record of the past. Out they turned, and with the help of the apprentices—most willing of volunteers unless they differed from any other apprentice boys!—Mr. Dummer's workmen were pelted out of the city and his waggons returned empty. He seems to have had a mania for purchasing old monuments, if it is true that he bought stones from Netley, but he was easily satisfied after all, for, failing to get the Butter Cross, he erected a plaster substitute, and as that was washed away by rain in half a dozen decades or so no one finally was any the worse!

Beyond the hill to the north of Otterbourne, Compton hides in a hollow of the Downs, where the lane from Pitt Down to Twyford crosses the main Winchester road. There are so many evidences of modern building in the vicinity that, though one knows there is every evidence to prove man had here his dwelling from pre-historic ages, it is a surprise on entering the north porch of the church to face a fine old arch of eleventh-century work. The history of All Saints, from 1015, when, by the will of Athelstan Atheling, it came into the possession of Godwin, son of Walfreth, to the enlargement in 1905, is set forth on a board hung in the porch, where all who list may read it. There are plans also, showing the church as it originally existed and how the additions were designed, making the old building a wide north aisle to the new. A roll of the rectors from 1288, when Hugh de Lavington held the living, up to the present, hangs near. Besides these documents there is a blue and white china bowl, like nothing but a small sugar basin, with a note to the effect that it was used for baptisms "for nearly 100 years previous to 1873." Outside to the south some worn grey tombstones are arranged as a fence to the churchyard where lies George Huntingford, the Greek scholar and theologian, Bishop of Gloucester, and eventually of Hereford, and Warden of Winchester College. Once he was curate of this townlet in the combe, and at his death in 1832 preferred the peaceful valley and the green turf of the little Norman church where he had first officiated to the pomp of his cold Norman cathedral. From this neighbourhood came one of the martyrs of the first Marian persecution, for John, third son of

Sir Peter Philpot, of Compton and Twyford, a Wykehamist and New College man, was an ardent reformer, and, as Archdeacon of Winchester, died in the flames at Smithfield in 1555. A name long well known in the vicinity is that of Goldfinch. The sons of the family, so runs the tale, were invariably christened Joseph or Richard, but once, it is reported, the custom was neglected and a young Goldfinch given the name of Barnard.

It was in the time of the Civil War when strife and misery were the lot of many who forbore to side with either of the opposing factions. But the preparations in the Goldfinch household were not for the coming of King's or Parliament's men. Among other things a special brew of ale had been set ready against the christening of an expected addition to the family whose arrival was imminent, when, as bad luck had it, a body of troopers under a Captain Barnard marched up and demanded a night's lodging. The Puritan soldiery, though they took their potions sadly, had noses as keen for a good brew as ever had gay Cavalier, and the christening ale was speedily seized on, though the poor lady protested none other could be prepared in time. Her dismay and sorrow had due effect on the Captain—for his gallantry he should have belonged to the other party!—and his orders were strict, for once his troopers must forgo their liquor; but, in return, he bargained that the infant, if a boy, should bear his name. So far Rumour; and once again has evidence turned up of the truth of that many-tongued gossip, for during some alterations a tombstone was discovered bearing the name of Barnard Goldfinch. Another Goldfinch, this time duly a Richard, was schoolmaster here in the eighteenth century; his claim to recollection seems to be that he was the unfortunate owner of a dog that came to an evil end and bit many people before the fate that awaits all mad dogs curtailed his vicious career!

Below the old east window is a monument to Roger Harris, grandson of Dr. Harris, another Winchester Warden. After warning all to read and consider "often, very often that it is appointed for all men to die," the epitaph finally concludes:—

> "The Rich the Poor, the Monarch and the Slave
> Rest undisturbed and no distinction have
> Within the Silent Chambers of the Grave."

Roger Harris, if he still sleeps undisturbed, has had fate more kindly than many of his fellows, and more than one monarch who found a tomb in Hampshire soil. And one, indeed, when carried by on humanity's last progress, must have passed within a mile of this spot. If instead of the high road a turn to the westward be taken beyond the cottages where the road bends in the valley after Otterbourne is left, you come on to the very track down which the bleeding body of the Red King was conveyed to Winchester in the August twilight. The lane is as varied in character as a true Hampshire lane should be: here high hedge left untrammelled to Nature's trimming, there a gap with a peep through into woodland, and beyond a clipped hedge, a patch of wild ground, or spreading acres of yellowing corn; banks lined with bracken, exquisite in spring when the soft fronds unclose and spread delicate lace patterns over the wild flowers in ditch and hedgerow, beautiful in summer greenery when the vetch flings its purple-blue blossoms in profusion over hedge and fern, twining round the young red shoots of maple and matting together the brake and the bramble, but most glorious in its pomp of autumn colouring. Here came Purkis with his cart and its grim burden after that memorable day's hunting in the Forest when Rufus fell, how—who shall say? Cannot you see those old charcoal burners in their rough dress and thong-bound leather leggings? Picture their alarm on finding that corpse. Leave it? What dire vengeance may be taken on the whole countryside when discovery ensue! So, stolid Purkis and his cart. May be, who knows, he shall get recompense other than the loss of his head. 'Tis a risky chance, but no such loophole offers otherwise. Then forward to Winchester.

A lane with such a history must needs have its ghost; still, all things considered, this one is flimsiest of that flimsy fraternity. But they who go down lonely country lanes at nightfall to see ghosts seldom go disappointed! Thus here—more authentic spectre there is not.

Hursley, which lies beyond to the west, is known to the world ecclesiastical as John Keble's Parish; to history as the home of Richard Cromwell the man who would *not* be king; and to sportsmen as the name-place of a Hunt proverbial for the stoutness of its foxes. A Hursley fox figured in a sensational bet in the last century when, without her knowledge or consent, a Miss

Reynolds, well known for her prowess in the field, was backed at £5,000 to £2 against any other woman to ride with one change of horses from London to Birmingham, to do four miles over the Newmarket course, four over a Hertfordshire steeplechase course, or to hunt the Hursley pack in October and *kill a fox*. A Manchester ladies' horsebreaker, Miss Mary Ashburton, is said to have accepted the challenge, but Miss Reynolds, annoyed at the liberty already taken with her name, would be in no ways concerned with the affair, and the wager fell through. So runs the yarn.

For its typical English charm Hursley has much to thank its situation in a valley winding south-westerly from Winchester's Downs to the fair Test valley: downland and copse, chalk-pit and meadow, the sweep of turf in its park and the embowering trees, and everywhere what—

> ". . . . old Hampshire still may own
> (Charm to other shires unknown)
> Bays and creeks of grassy lawn
> Half beneath his woods withdrawn" [1]

making a perfect setting for the old cottages and newer buildings that, thanks to the lords of the manor, are modern without the crudeness of colour and stereotyped style that damn modernity in so many country villages; so the age-worn timbers and slightly projecting upper story of one cottage and the fresh plaster of another have no quarrel. In these days of changeful stress and restlessness it is somewhat unique to find even a country corner where, without stagnation, the same rule has obtained for seventy years, but in Keble's Parish it is so. The gentle poet, brilliant scholar, and great Tractarian came to Hursley in 1836, and, refusing all preferment, accomplished in this quiet village a work English churchmen will ever remember. The Rev. James Young followed close in his predecessor's footsteps, and till he too was called to rest from his life's labour the ideal of Hursley was to keep village and church, built by Keble and designed by him, as he had organised and kept it, until the "advanced" became in some modern eyes "behind the times"! It must be confessed the windows are by no means up to modern standards, though over no part of

[1] Keble. "To the Lord of the Manor of Merdon."

the church was more thought and trouble taken ; but the vitrifier's art was at a very low ebb in those days, and many of the windows were taken out, some three times over, before Mr. Keble was in any measure satisfied. Nathless the discarded ones were bought, and doubtless much admired, by less critical purchasers. No wonder John Keble was hard to please, for the church of his old home and parish, Fairford, had one of the finest sets of windows in England.

With writing come memories of my first sight of the village, one St. Swithun's Day. The Saint had behaved nastily ; damp, drizzle and downpour was the order of his going. On my way from Salisbury a heavy shower broke and washed out the low wooded hills with, in every sense, damping deliberateness ! Romsey was passed under leaden gloom, but another six miles and, by evening, the rain had washed clean the face of the dusty green world for sun to gild with a glory of orange light, which flooded the valley as a turn in the elm-bordered road led into a village that in such golden glow seemed a very dream. The picture lingers as one most typical of Hursley, whence came light in what were dark days in the history of the English Church. But this is no place to inquire into the Oxford Movement, nor have we space to discourse further of the men who shared in it, finished scholars all, with that calm gentleness characteristic of the Tractarians. I know not if they took for keynote, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength," but an they did then are they of the very spirit and essence of Hampshire's *religio loci.*

One more sketch of Hursley before passing to its history, Hursley from the vicarage garden, from under the clustering beeches where the wood pigeons coo softly in the sun speckled green depths overhead. Blue drifts of smoke wreath the tiled chimneys and vanish into the deep gloom of firs beyond the red-brown roof-tiles among the big elms ; a tinkle of metal from the forge, the music of old Tubal Cain, and a hollow boom of guns reverberating from Salisbury Plain, echoes of man's sin insulting the utter peace of this valley, blend with the happy laughter of children—there is Hampshire, and England, in miniature. Industry, Defence, Home ; and above the tall church spire like a guardian spirit : so mote it be ; and long may the Mummers yet make merry at Christmas, and the children dance round their May-day Queen singing :

"April's gone, the King of showers,
May is come, the Queen of flowers;
Give me something, gentles dear,
For a blessing on the year.
For my garland, give, I pray,
Words and smiles of cheerful May.
Birds of spring, to you we come,
Let us pick a little crum."[1]

Hursley, or Hurstleigh, was an appanage of Merdon, and for nine centuries belonged to the see of Winchester. The original church probably dated from early Norman times, for in the fifteenth century it had to be rebuilt. Three hundred years later it had again fallen into disrepair and is described as low, dark, and several feet below the level of the churchyard. Nor was the next building much better constructed, and artistic merit it had none. Before the first rebuilding Hursley had been given by Bishop Pontoise, when rector, to the chantry he founded at Winchester, dedicated to St. Elizabeth of Hungary. Thereafter Hursley saw some unhappy and troublous days, and many changes. In the reign of Elizabeth the incumbent was one of the twenty-four Hampshire clergy ejected for refusing to take the Oath of Supremacy, while later Walter Marshall, who held the living in 1662, was ejected for non-conformity. The Lord's House, or Lodge, was built by Sir Phillip Hobby when Edward VI gave him the manor, confiscated from the Winton see. Restored to its ecclesiastical owners by Mary, it was again sequestrated by Act of Parliament in the first year of her Protestant sister's reign and regranted to the Hobbys. Giles Hobby sold the manor to his father-in-law, Sir Thomas Clarke of Avington, and something may be gleaned of his rule from the MSS. of a local historian, Richard Marsh.

During Haydobyn days [hay dog time], when the tenants and copyholders of Merdon had to reap and house the crops for the lord of the manor, a yearly custom that ended with general merrymaking and country dances, the fare provided for the workers was "a hogshead of porridge which stank and had worms swimming in it"! This was too much for the reapers, and one, Roger Coram of Cranbury, challenged the steward Rye. A notable sight it must have been that duel with daggers

[1] Written by Keble for the Hursley children.

in the standing wheat, whilst angry workers gaped around and cheered their champion lustily; nor were they appeased till my lady "promised to dress for them two or three hogs of bacon; twenty nobles' work lost," concludes the chronicler.

Sir Thomas sold the manor before his death to a lawyer of Longwood, William Brock, and after this it passed by the marriage of his daughter to John Arundel, and again by purchase to Sir Nathaniel Napier of Critchel: then the manor was purchased from Sir Gerald Napier by Richard Major, and with his daughter Dorothy Hursley emerges from local into national history.

"Take heed of an inactive, vain spirit," Cromwell exhorted his son. Few have had less of the man of action in their composition than poor Tumble-down Dick. He would be a loyal country gentleman, hunting, hawking, racing and sketching in beautiful Hampshire. Fate made him the son of the regicide. Verily the sins of the father were visited on the son! His eighty-six years were not to be completed at peaceful Hursley, even when his short day of public ineptitude ended. Debts made him an exile, his daughters did their best to make him die a beggar. But in the end these young women, who would seem to have had more of the stuff of their grandsire than their easy-going father, were compelled to relinquish the manor of Hursley which Richard's son had held after Dame Dorothy died, so Richard passed the last six years of his life in quiet at the Lodge. When the Misses Cromwell sold it to William Heathcote after their father's death the old house was pulled down because, so says tradition, a roof that had sheltered the regicide and his brood was no fit dwelling for loyal subjects! It was during this rebuilding that the die of the Great Seal of the Commonwealth was discovered hidden in a wall. Richard Cromwell lies in Hursley Church, but owns not even a memorial tablet to himself—he who sat in the seat of kings. Only two lines on the monument "erected to the Memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Cromwell, spinster," one of the grasping daughters, permits future generations to know that "Richard Cromwell, Esq.: Father of the said Elizabeth Cromwell, died 12th July, 1712, in the 86th year of his Age."

"Poor Idle Triviality"!

On the death of the fifth Baronet the Hursley estates were again sold. "No one was more truly the perfect type and

pattern of an English country gentleman than Sir William Heathcote. . . . He was the highest product of a class and school of thought which is fast disappearing," as Lord Carnarvon wrote to *The Times*. When Frederick William IV sent two jurists to inquire into the English magisterial system, Winchester Quarter Sessions were selected for model, and the Prussians were entertained by the Chairman, Sir William Heathcote, at Hursley, where many tales survived of their surprise and interest in all they saw. It would not have been easy to find a village with more typical Squire and Parson than Sir William and his erstwhile Oxford tutor, John Keble.

At the north end of Hursley Park are the ruins of old Merdon Castle, and between it and the house stretch timber-dotted spaces of green turf. The outer ring of the embankments is crowned with fine trees, and the twisted roots of beech and yew are knotted, like the network of veins on a melon, over the crumbling moss-grown earth down to the russet litter of last year's leaves, that lie in the hollows and bank up against beds of nettles or low elder bushes. In spring-time the hawthorns in and above the tree-grown moat on the western slopes spread a cloud of white loveliness; the sward within is like soft velvet, and ash and ivy cover what little remains of the stout old walls with a gracious verdure. Huge slabs of buff fungus, like gigantic leather oyster-shells, drain the last life from decaying timber; the hollow trunk of an ancient yew is invaded by a plant of belladonna—how the old lover of symbol would have revelled in this, death the canker in the heart of life!—with vervain, "magick herb" near by, while the green-leaved hounds-tongue opens its blue and reddish purple blossoms on the grassy outworks. The flora of all this neighbourhood is very diversified owing to the variety of soils: briony and travellers' joy that wreathe the Hursley hedges will not grow at Ampfield, but you may find the drooping blossom of the fritillary there, with its pink and purple checkerings, and hunt for it in vain at Hursley. Behind the ruins of the old gateway one gets a good view to the eastward, showing the rounded sides of the mounds that were once fair turrets, and the mild grassy slopes that veil escarpment, rampart and fosse, a fine perspective of park with deer browsing among the timber, and beyond the circling trees the blues and greens of the valleys stretch to low hills which shut out the sea.

Legend affirms that the well in the centre of the smooth-turfed lawn is bottomless, and connected by an underground channel with the Pole Hole at Otterbourne. Moreover, so goes the tale, when, to test this theory, a pair of ducks were introduced into the well, after what must have been as perilous a journey as any of Rider Haggard's heroes survived, they eventually emerged at Otterbourne, still alive, but *without any feathers!* Scoffers inquire where the feathers sank to. Another story is that Old Noll used the well as hiding-place for some of his ill-gotten wealth. As was right and proper for hidden treasure a spell lay over it, that when it should be drawn up if any spoke it would be for ever lost. Accordingly when the time came to extract the hoard due silence was maintained, but as the chest appeared in view at the top of the well one excited watcher exclaimed, "There it is!" and lo! instantaneously the rope broke and the chest sank with a whirling splash into the darkness, nevermore to be seen by mortal eye. Its fate may be known to the web-footed fraternity of these parts if the adventurous couple lived to quack any intelligence! The pixies, however, must have secured it before the well was cleaned, for no trace of treasure was then forthcoming. But, methinks, Merdon Castle well has no monopoly of these legends. Also the Castle has history other than legendary, for if Merdon was the Merantune of the Saxons—some claim it for Merdon in Surrey—it was hereabouts that Cyneheard, having murdered Cynewulf, met his due fate at the hands of the dead king's thanes. The castle was built by Henry de Blois in the wild times of King Stephen, probably on the site of an old Celtic stronghold. From the military point of view it was finely situated, and, as its deep earthworks still testify, must have been of very considerable strength. Too strong, in fact, to be pleasant in the eyes of the ruling powers, hence the order of Henry II for its dismantlement. By the end of the Plantagenet period de Blois' fine castle was a neglected ruin.

Some of the lands of Merdon Manor were held under the old Borough English or cradle-fief rights. The name "is taken from a local word used in a trial in the time of Edward III,"[1] it was rather a topsy-turvey arrangement, for by it the tenements descended to the youngest, and possibly arose from an idea that the eldest would be most capable on

[1] Elton. *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

the parents' death of looking after himself. Among the examples of cradle-holding given in Comer's *Borough-English in Sussex* are nine Hampshire manors, but this system was more general in Kent, Sussex and Surrey than ever in our county. Other old Saxon customs such as cultivating the land in common, survived till late, and traces may still be noted in the long narrow fields here as in many other parts of the county. The "water carriages," or broad ditches in the fields, were dug for purposes of irrigation in the time of Charles II.

The first turn to the westward on the Winchester road after leaving Hursley leads direct to Merdon and on to Farley Chamberlayne and Braishfield by delightfully twisty lanes, under overhanging beeches, by banks of reddish earth festooned with ivy sprays, past an opening glade, an old oak, a thatched cottage with its garden a gay bouquet of colours and sweet scents, a barn of tarred timber under a new straw roof—startlingly like a yellow wig plastered by some freakish fancy on a nigger's pate! So the rather rough roadway runs to turn right and left in the shallow valley bordered by fields, on one side a smooth lawn of turf rising to the beech hanger that caps the hill, outliers from Ampfield Wood, the slope on the other yellowed with ripening corn and the blue-green of young oats tossing fantastically over the scarlet of poppies. North of the lane, before the turn through Pucknall, lies the manor of Slackstead that from the days of Edward the Elder to Tudor times appertained to the Abbey of Hyde. When the Abbey was despoiled Bluff Harry's Groom of the Robes, Thomas Sternhold, a Hampshire man and one of Winchester's scholars, had Slackstead for share. His widow married Sir William Hobby, hence the wording of her brass in Hursley Church:—

> "forget not then that worthy Sternhold's wife
> our hobbies make."

Worthy Sternhold! Was he thinking of his Hampshire hogs when he penned—

> "Then be not like the hogge that hath
> a pearle at his desire,
> And takes more pleasure in the trough
> and wallowing in the mire"?

But Hampshire "hogges" are, as the porcine race goes, cleanly beasts. Talking of pigs, Hursley has one more claim

to note before we leave it, and that is to have contributed a well-known good story to the *répertoire* of yarns. Vicar Heathcote in a sermon used the word "predestination" and —well everyone knows the old villagers explained it as meaning "the innards of a pig"! "Hockered animals to drive is a pig when there's a many of 'em, very," the late Lady Heathcote used to give as a sample of local phraseology—but that is too wide a subject to embark on, though the theme is tempting.

Sternhold prepared, with Hopkins, a metrical edition of the Psalms, "in hopes of improving the manners of the Court," very similar to William Shuter's *Gesagen*, the accepted version of a people, dwellers in even more remote and solitary places than the wildest nook in Hampshire's Downs, unlettered, and with the simplicity that cannot see when homeliness and crudities make for bathos, yet withal apt enough with their rough symbolisms and apropos quotation from Holy Writ—too apt at times for the polished culture of nineteenth-century politicians! Something there must be akin to the spirit of the veld in the Downs that, folded round with woodland, enclose these valleys. Something there is, the intangible attribute of all gracious spaces. Follow the lane from Standon that leads up to Pitt Down between wild hedges, with many and many a dark shadow amid their greenness where a yew breaks the line. But how can words depict such a scene as the view from Pitt Down looking towards distant Wiltshire, a broken land of hill and dale, of irregular woods and grassed fields, when with cloud shadows fleeting over it turns from grey to gold, from indigo gloom to green of a clearness that rivals the emerald because more changeful? Here a patch of ripening corn gleams faintly, paled by the wonderful carpet of golden crowsfoot and yellow bedstraw at our feet—"Broad indeed is the carpet which God has spread, and beautiful the colours which He has given it," as saith Abul Fazl. Watch a cloud pass and a whole hillside darken almost to blackness, till a stray sunbeam shoots through, and with long luminous finger parts the shadow that veiled a dell in what before looked unbroken sweep of down; then with a flood of light the woods stand out in the full richness of summer foliage, and beyond a line, and again a line, of faint blue hills rising by Amesbury, and round in irregular ridges up to Inkpen, away yonder to the north-west by Sidown and Beacon Hill, solitary sentinel in the cleft of the

Downs that leads to Newbury. Then, as day passes, all one valley lies in a luminous haze, and West Wood stands out black against it, running up to the wooded slope of Ashley Down, a jetty outline against the western sky. Gold there now, a mingling of soft yellows as of the unripe corn in yonder fields flecked with cloudlets that outvie the deepest orange of the crowsfoot. But the long threatening rain-clouds creep onward, a grey veil hides the middle distance, the far hills melt into the pearl tints of the horizon, rain and Night's shadows wipe out the picture.

Are we as gregarious truly as it would seem, or is it merely the force of habit due to congregation in the too thickly populated districts to which the business of life drives us? The lover of solitary places is not unique in our midst. Strong though custom be, stronger than the fear of outraging it, there be many of us who revel in the untrammelled freedom of a lonely wander through the secret woods, and over the wide-spreading uplands, with their changeful downs and dells, and who in busier scenes have had to wrestle with the hungry desire to drink in this soft, fresh air, and know again that intangible joy in mere living, culminating—as it must if we permit the sweet influences of Nature to work unchecked—in a spiritual exaltation, till imagination carry us "further than the confines of the material world," and perchance we also see "with unclouded vision the radiant heights that lie beyond" through the golden gateway of the glowing west. Then, when the troubles and chances of mortal life drag us back to the daily round, may we echo the words of one who felt the spirit of Hampshire's open spaces as well as the beauties of Virginia's blue distances and the illimitable influence of the veld:—"It was just like heaven. It was heaven"; and some of the glory will linger even in the midst of life's most prosaic and utter grey.

CHAPTER III

PLAIN LAND AND HILLY

"The scenery of the south of Hampshire is of all others the most difficult to describe; for it is not the picturesqueness which may be thrown off in a few careless strokes; or the sublime which, with the wish to delineate it, almost inspires the power; but the beautiful—sometimes in its gayest, and sometimes in its softest dress—but always the beautiful, of which the prevailing and pervading charm is not the woods or streams or villages, nor even the sparkling ocean, but the exquisite arrangement and combination of the whole."

WHEN Mary Russell Mitford wrote thus to Sir William Elford the dales and commons round Southampton wore aspect diverse from the scene that there meets the eye to-day, for no more can Hampshire lovers claim for it "the total absence of the vulgar hurry of business," and Southampton's "playful waters" are not "uncontaminated by commerce" any longer. However, we have gained in prosperity if we have lost picturesqueness. But despite red-brick suburbs, bungalow towns, and much else of modern business and ugliness, the beauty has not entirely vanished, charms are for the finding in many an unexpected corner, and the difficulty of description is to the full as great! For the beauty is the beauty of little things—a Japanese effect of colour in the lanes when the poppy nods its crinkled scarlet petals by the mauve and purple of knapweed and scabious; a sunset sky behind a trellis-work of black and white, when the hoar-frost lays fairy fingers on the bare tree branches; or the joyous gaiety of spring flowers and colouring; otherwise there is but little to mark in this country between the Itchen and the Meon, no outstanding features till the Downs are reached, but quiet, homely scenery, woodland and pasture, tilled fields and gorse dotted commons where heather and pines add their

wonderful colours to the green and gold. The lanes wind about, with little seeming purpose in the twistings, between low hedges, by acres of oats or corn, fragrant beanfields and meadows laid up for hay. If here and there the lilac and yellow of thistle and ragwort signal poorer soil, there is little sign of agricultural depression, outwardly at all events, about the cosy farmsteads in sheltered groves with big brown stacks crowding the rickyards by the tiled or thatched barns, and heavy-uddered cows standing knee-deep in the thick grass of the meadows watered by tributary streamlets of the Itchen or the Hamble, that rise on the tree-crowned ridges. There are good highways, and if not always on the flat there are no gradients that need trouble the motorist or tax the cyclist's powers, and the gentle swell and fall of the land gives a succession of changing pictures, that may not be striking at the moment but become so by comparison with a dead-level country, which seldom fails to remind one of the copybook maxim anent the pleasantness of variety. And if most of the buildings on the main roads are of a rubicund modernity—as though they had not yet ceased to blush at their sudden uprising—in the byways you may hap upon old cottages with deep-slanting roofs of wonderfully age-toned tile or thatch, timber-framed may be, with walls of brick nogging, wattle-and-daub, or a true Hampshire chalk wall.

Alack-a-day! the building of chalk walls is an almost forgotten craft, so discouraged by the jerry-builder and the purveyor of tin bungalows that it is with difficulty any one desirous, not like Balbus of building a wall himself, but of having one built with lasting properties in this time-honoured fashion can find a workman able to undertake the job. A skilful hand once found, one may well pause to note his ways and methods, for a description will possibly be considered a curiosity not many years hence, an account of a dead industry, a lost art. Be it known, then, that the chalk to be used must first be left exposed all the winter, in order that the disintegrating influence of frost and damp may act upon it before it can be "puddled" for building in the spring. To "puddle" is simply to make a mud pie on a large scale. Water is poured on to the softened chalk and the workmen stamp it with their feet into a thick paste, to which chopped straw is added as a bind. When the plastic mass is kneaded to the required consistency, it is

plastered up with a trident-shaped instrument. As the wall grows the builder stands upon it and treads down the puddled chalk while his assistants shovel it up with their tridents. The whole primitive process is done by rule of thumb, and the durability of the structure depends largely on the experience of the builder. No plummet is used, but the wall is built to the height desired by the eye alone. Its own weight sinks and solidifies it. When dry a newly-built wall looks like nothing so much as a hedgehog, for the bits of straw stick out in every direction, till they are shaved off with a peculiar kind of knife made for the purpose, and a coat of mortar put over as a finish. A chalk wall must be bonneted with tiles or thatch, else the rain will work in and rot the material, but built on a strong and dry foundation, and properly protected, these walls will last for hundreds of years, and acquire fine mellow tones of colour.

Cut off from the Itchen valley by the slightest of water-partings, the Hamble joins Southampton Water by an estuary out of all proportion with its total length, for its three branches rise, one some two miles north of Durley, the others at Bishop's Waltham, and the Hamble Creek runs up to Botley, giving that quaint old town some share in seaborne traffic. Botley, moreover, has a station on the Portsmouth branch of the South-Western Railway from Eastleigh, and a branch railway to Bishop's Waltham, so the little market town is still the centre of this district; but, notwithstanding such connection with the busy world, it has a singularly unspoilt air, the more remarkable for its surroundings. Shanties, cottages, villas, alike only in their modern lack of picturesqueness—this sounds more charitable than absence of taste!—are scattered everywhere about this part of Hampshire, along the lanes and down the main roads, here flush with the roadway, there set back in a plot of ground, with perhaps a field and orchard fenced or wired in, by a strip of garden, almost certainly corrugated iron and wire netting somewhere, and generally with a strawberry ground, for Botley strawberries are notorious both for quality and quantity. "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did," as said Dr. William Butler, of medical ale fame, if indeed he be Izaak Walton's "Dr. Boteler."

The road to Winchester is said to have been made chiefly at the instigation of William Cobbett of Fairthorn Farm, author of *Rural Rides*, a collection of topographical information

Hamble Estuary.

and political diatribes, in which there is frequent comment on the badness of the Hampshire roads. This Winchester road, a good one, as are most of the highways here, runs by wooded and cultivated country west of Durley to Fairoak—where a cross-road leads to the charming old village of Bishopstoke—and joins the Winchester-Portsmouth road by Fisher's Pond.

The puzzle to find Durley has passed into a local proverb, and indeed the lanes around twist and turn, branch off and

Durley Mill on the Hamble River.

double back in most provoking fashion; moreover, Durley is so scattered you may pass it in the search half a dozen times without realising Durley has been reached and left behind. To tell truth I am by no means certain which of its component parts *is* Durley! What constitutes a village? The church? The inn? The post-office? An inn and a letter-box are by Durley Street, a mile and more from the church, and another inn and a smithy lie a mile off in another direction! The

writer found the lanes where Durley is supposed to be, and the church, without difficulty from Bishop's Waltham, turning sharp to the left at the bottom of the first hill on the lower Winchester road. It was a pleasant lane with a good surface, or so it seemed that early summer morning, before the June sun had scorched the dewdrops off the nodding briar roses and the silence of later summer days was not yet on the birds. So with many a peep at the wooded hills and dales and backwards to the Downs, Durley Street was passed and then "Dirty Durley" itself, by no means deserving that qualification for the moment. The church is nearly another mile on, and were not its shingle turret visible among the trees one would not think of turning north at the cross-roads to find it. But St. Cross is worth a visit if you care to hunt out the key.

This matter of finding keys is an old quarrel of mine, and so at the outset it may as well be confessed that for my part if a church is locked it may so continue. If all churches were locked, or only those that are left open were rifled, the argument of expediency might be accepted without question. But it is not so. Inquiry generally discloses that the true reason is a desire to avoid that little extra trouble entailed. It is seldom a church that is well cared for, and where the services are held oftener than the required minimum of times, is found to be locked. Those who, like the writer, have had to waste many precious minutes of a rare holiday while inquiry is made for the guardian of the key—it is a moral certainty that you find the local Peter has "just this moment gone"—will concur in the above decision that, as a general rule, if a church is locked it had best be left unvisited. Last year when exploring many new and revisiting old and beloved corners of Hampshire for the purpose of writing this book, I commenced a list, a black list, of churches found locked. It is, however, not a fair guide, for some of the evil-doers in the land, finding the police entirely occupied with that fascinating pastime motor traps, seized the opportunity to burgle many of the Hampshire churches, and as a result some were locked up that as a rule are not so. Whilst on the subject a word might be said—many for that matter!—on the attendant question of tipping. That those who can spare a trifle should contribute to the upkeep of the churches they visit for curiosity or pleasure is right enough, but when the coin passes to the grimy palm of a

bibulous old dodderer who has pressed his undesired society and gabble of inaccurate information upon one solely with that end in view, it is another affair. The memory of a visit to a minster in an adjoining county when all pleasure in the ancient building and its many memorials was destroyed by the pestering attention of an ancient functionary with expectancy of tip writ large in his beery eye, is with me yet—but enough!

Durley, as has been said, came into my black list, so it was only possible to note an old oak door, studded with many a nail, and a fine yew alongside the roadway. The church is not among the oldest in this county, full of Norman churches, as it is of thirteenth-century work. Durley Manor is of Tudor days, and according to local tradition was the home for a time of two sisters of Oliver Cromwell.

Any stranger who came to Bishop's Waltham by train, or by the highroad from Winchester, were it not for the ivy-covered grey ruin that stands so picturesquely beyond the big pond on the further side of the little station, might from there judge the town to be modern as the scattered houses we have already noted about the countryside, for to the west of the station the town is new, and the road runs by an ugly row of red villas, much in need of creepers to hide their newness—seemingly in need of tenants also!—suggestive of a too confident attempt to get level with the times that the railway was to usher in. But beyond the stretch of weed-grown waters and rushes circling the Pond, lies a town quaint and old-fashioned as Botley itself, with many a low, thatched house in its narrow streets and the square by the hotel, so suggestive of coaching days—a nasty turn beyond, though, for the Gosport coach to gain the shady road up the hill and down under over-arching elms to the mill in the valley below, and the white-railed bridge across the stream running silently from the green pool above, whereby lies the route through Shedfield to Wickham, also old and quaint. In fact, in this neighbourhood, the towns are more countrified than the country! The small freeholders are a very different class from most of the country folk, and a curious one. At present they, like their abodes, are too new, their corners and colouring have yet to be softened down! One looks in vain for the old friendly village spirit—even village cricket threatens to become a thing of the past. The very love of home seems weakened. The children, educated just to the

point of imagining they "know a thing or two," have little wish to work on the land and would make for towns. Life behind a shop counter is, forsooth, freer in their eyes. A not uncommon result of our unpractical educational methods, that cost so much and teach so little worth the knowing.

Bishop's Waltham market in bygone days was looked on with scant favour by the Winchester citizens, for it is mentioned in their records as "to the great prejudice of the citie." The town must have owed much of this prosperity to its roads; lanes lead to Swanmore, Droxford, Upham, and branch over the adjacent country; there is choice of two roads to Winchester, and another highway cuts through the town, a direct road from Southampton to London. But the route by Winchester is so excellent, with not a dangerous gradient this side the county border, and only one long hill, near Alton, that this road, though it may save a mile or two, will stand comparison in nothing but scenery, for, if the surface is good, it is distinctly hilly till the subcline of the Downs is gained, and there is many a steep pitch to negotiate by West Meon.

A tower, portions of wall, five windows of the great hall, and part of the refectory are all that remains to be seen of the palace Henry de Blois built for the Winchester Bishops, for though restored to the See when the Stuarts regained the throne, the Bishops left the building, despoiled after it was beseiged and taken by the Parliamentarians, to fall into total decay. De Blois' castle was first dismantled soon after its building, when Henry II meted a like fate to the Bishop's other strongholds, Merdon and Wolvesley, but later it was rebuilt and enlarged, as palace rather than castle, by one of Hampshire's greatest sons, William of Wykeham, ever to be remembered as the master-builder who gave England such grand memorials as his work in Windsor Castle, Queenborough Castle in Kent, the reconstructed nave of the Cathedral and St. Mary's College at Winchester, and New College, Oxford. Were this all we could do no less than rank him with the great ones, but Wykeham was a great-great one, to borrow an expressive Zulu term—some of our old Hampshire names, by the way, have just such a venerable and rolling sound as Zulu words. Hampshire has three great-great ones, even as the world counts greatness—Alfred, William of Wykeham and Arthur Duke of Wellington. To attempt to compress even

an outline of the life of any one of the three into the limits of a page were as futile as needless. Well might Froissart remark: "There reigned in England a priest called Sir William de Wican!" And who does not know that the great Bishop and Chancellor had enemies, like every other man great enough to provoke envy, saw reverses of fortune, quarrelled with John of Gaunt, was consequently accused by him of embezzlement and other crimes, with the result that his temporalities were for a time sequestered?

With our subject-matter, too, the Bishop was concerned, for

On the Hamble below Bishop's Waltham.

Hampshire highways and byways in Plantagenet times were in a sad state till Wykeham took active measures and spared no expense to better their condition, building raised causeways over the sloughs and marshes, and bridges across the rivers and streams. Then his great works of construction and endowment completed, and eighty years of strenuous life accomplished, in his palace here the old man passed away. These grey walls had frowned down on the meeting of a great council when Henry II, anxious to go a-crusading, begged for the sinews of war; on his Crusader son, Richard the Lion-

heart, feasting in state when he had escaped from his captors and returned to be crowned at Winchester; while Margaret of Anjou was yet to come within them, and, as the honoured guest of Cardinal Beaufort, lie in "his blue bed of gold and damask" that the courtly prelate left to her by will; but methinks never a scene could have been so impressive as when the body of the aged Bishop was carried forth in solemn procession to be laid in his Cathedral chantry, for even his contemporaries, the last to appraise a man truly, knew that a great man had departed.

There was not much even before its latest restoration, in Bishop's Waltham Church that stood in Wykeham's day, unless, perchance, the Perpendicular chancel; and there is little in the old streets to detain us from our goal—the Cathedral City—beyond a few memories of French prisoners quartered here a century ago. Among them was the painter, Louis Garneray, who was recaptured when trying to escape from the *Crown* prison ship, in Portsmouth Harbour. His companion in the attempt was drowned, but Garneray stuck in the mud, which saved his life, though he lived it in exile.

Those for whom time is an available commodity, and stiff hills have no terror, even if their road-book describes the gradients as "mostly dangerous," may take the upper route to Winchester, for the scenery is recompense in full for any troubles by the wayside. But before following it over the Downs a page or two must be spared to note what lies by the easier highway. For instance, in correct guide-book phrase, admirers of *Night Thoughts* will turn up the lane to White Hill, for Upham was the birthplace of the poet Young, and pacing up and down the lime avenue in later years he composed that dreary poem. He was also a Winchester scholar. Lemprière remarks that "as a poet Young is highly respectable." This is not encouraging, but then Bulwer-Lytton considered justice had never been done to the gloomy poet. For our part the post of sympathetic expounder may go a-begging; gloom has a corner in the picture when it throws up the lights, as the yews show off the soft greens of hedge and hollow in springtime; but heavy gloom is another affair, and a landscape all yews and junipers shadowing barren earth under a leaden sky only a warped and morbid temperament would perpetuate. Such was Edward Young's.

But Young was not the only poet connected with this neighbourhood, for a boy whose school career at Twyford ended, by all accounts, somewhat abruptly, won fame by the very gift that led him into trouble with an unappreciative master, if legends be true.

"In fearless youth we tempt the heights of art,"

and so Alexander Pope left Twyford in disgrace for writing satires on the powers that ruled his schoolboy world before a—

". . . generous critic fanned the poet's fire
And taught the world with reason to admire."

From the open country by the Uphams—Lower Upham is on the highway itself—the road passes to more wooded land, and winds pleasantly between low hedges. A mile before the quoit ground by the Queen's Head Inn is reached, on the south side of the road stands a grand old barn, by an ivied house. This is Marwell Manor Farm, the Grange of the college for secular priests that Henry de Blois founded in the twelfth century. It stood in the park to the north, but the present house is modern. The surrounding woods on a summer day give full value of contrast when their dark olive and indigo lines are set against the golden sweep of cornfields, broken by browned meadows of uncut grass, with green or violet stripes where a patch of potatoes in blossom runs up between swedes or clover. The college was in Owlesbury parish, and when De Blois built the church there he ordained that four priests were to pray for the King, the Bishop of Winchester, and "other benefactors and faithful Christians." The college was, according to Duthy, "resorted to by the more pious as a scene of retirement and devout meditation, and by the more active and worldly as a spot adapted to rural recreation and sylvan sports"! Though the foundation received endowments from successive Bishops, by the sixteenth century the income only sufficed for the support of two priests, and the college had dwindled to a chantry. Thereafter the Manor of Marwell fell into evil hands. John Poynet, an accomplished scholar, but with no very savoury reputation in domestic matters, to gain the Winchester See alienated Marwell and other manors to Protector Somerset in 1551. Poynet would seem to have been a sixteenth-century Dr. Jekyll, for if

he helped with the compilation of the first Prayer Book he was also, as the diary of his contemporary John Machyn confirms, "devorsyed from the bocheres wyff at St. Powles," and paid the Nottingham butcher yearly damages when he made her Mrs. Poynet number three! Seymour bestowed Marwell on his black-sheep brother. Old Marwell Hall not only had a legend but a ghost. It is one of the three places in Hampshire that claim the legend of The Mistletoe Bough for their own. "One telleth," as worthy Fuller would have said, that the rector of Upham used to show the identical chest. Unfortunately that identical chest has vanished! "Ingoldsby's" story was given on the authority of Lady Douglas. The spectre has at least some reasonable ground for its ghostly existence, for at Marwell, they say, Jane Seymour was preparing for her bridal when Anne Boleyn paid for her brief royalty by death on the scaffold, and the English Bluebeard had his third wedding here directly word arrived of her decease. So, very properly, the heartless Jane had to walk her brother's house when she, too, left this "sorry Scheme of Things" a year later.

By the Queen's Head the road joins Cobbett's highway from Botley, and passes a shady corner where a lane turns up to Owslebury. This was once a favourite place for Winchester youth to picnic when Colden Common *was* a common, and many a merry party gathered here in the "old Squire's day" to skate on the ice of Fisher's Pond. Sometimes the little lake fringed with brown tasselled reeds and flowery rush in the long narrow valley seems lonely enough yet for wood nymphs to revel in the shade of trees that shadow the still waters, and water-maidens to sport on the little islands of flat green leaves clustering round the gold and white crowns of the water-lilies. In summer the steely-blue glint between the trees that shut it from the roadway tempts the wayfarer to loiter, though nothing so dainty as elfin laughter is like to break the silence, and if you sight nude figures flashing by the rushy marge the very human shouts that echo round will proclaim them nothing more mysterious than village boys. But the Common! A barren waste with here and there a scraggy fir, brick-fields, tin huts, untidy plots, hideous rows of —doubtless they call themselves villas, cottage suggests a homeliness entirely unsuggested here. Even the glories of a golden sunset could not mend the ugliness, though, when last

I passed it, a flood of yellow light wrapt the valley in a shimmer of haze from which the further hills stood out, in colour resembling an unripe grape with the bloom on it, and the flat white umbels of the cow-parsnip looked like floating discs of light above a luminous sea of green and gold. But this only intensified the unsightliness of modern red brick, tin, and wire. Some idea of what Colden Common once was might be gathered from the wild bit of oak wood near the grey flint church, and a survival of real common, carefully wired off from the roadway, overrun with bramble-brakes and rose-bushes wreathed with honeysuckle in sweet confusion among the furze clumps. It seemed incredible that the bricks in long rows in the field to the south could ever gain the wonderful variety of colour displayed by the walls and tiled gables of an old farm opposite, which with its surrounding elms and fine ash tree in the sunset light had the suggestion of detail and deep rich tones of a Nasmyth picture.

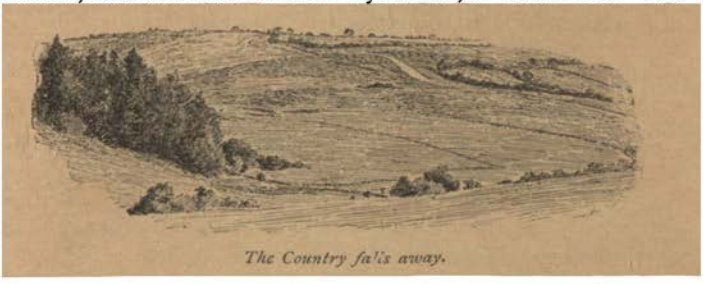
Twyford is yet a mile further, on the last spur of the Downs as they shelve to the river levels, with the wild open spaces of the uplands to the north and green meadows below where Itchen spreads his waters in half a dozen channels looping round the flowery meads. Not one but many beds must he have for portion. He is not discontented, for he never murmurs, he rather sings a low song of satisfaction with his lot, but he is distinctly greedy! The situation is hard to beat, and so fine was the air considered, and the village so sheltered, that in early Victorian days it was a favourite health resort for consumptive patients. But "the Queen of Hampshire Villages" has paid very dearly for popularity. The old-world charms are vanishing, modern buildings crowd on the pretty cottages, brick and slated villas eclipse old timber work and thatch. Nor do many time-honoured customs survive the destroyal of their setting, and St. Clement's Day, the blacksmiths' holiday, is no longer celebrated as of yore by explosions on the anvils. The church has been rebuilt, and only the grand old yew tree knows what truth may be in stories of a Druid circle and British church; it may have heard thereof in early youth! According to Domesday Book Twyford belonged immemorially to the Winchester See. Edward VI gave it to the Seymours, and in the seventeenth century it was purchased by Sir Henry Mildmay with the *dot* of his bride,

heiress of a London Alderman and eke Lord Mayor, Sir Leonard Holiday. Fortunately the estate was settled on the lady, for "Sir Whimsey," a Parliamentarian and one of those appointed to judge the King after his betrayal, ended his days in exile. Shawford House was built by their son. The male line became extinct in 1768, but Sir Henry St. John when he married the Mildmay heiress took the name as well as the lady and her lands. Seager's Buildings is said to be the school where young Pope so unwisely occupied his lesson hours!

A mile or more below Shawford, down the Itchen meadows, a grand avenue leads to Brambridge House formerly the property of the Smythes. In this peaceful spot after Paris school-days were over Maria Smythe spent her girlhood. When on a visit to relations in another part of the county she met the Dorsetshire gentleman to whom she was shortly afterwards married, Edward Weld, of Lulworth Castle. After his death the young widow is said to have lived for a time in a cottage by Colden Common. Later she married again, and when for a second time widowed, Fate overtook the beautiful and witty lady. The intricate story of her connection with Prince George has now been told in full, and some of the many unfounded tales proved incorrect are those placing the scene of the private wedding in diverse places than her own drawing-room in London, among others in the little chapel attached to her Hampshire home. The Smythes were Roman Catholics, and had fitted up a cottage room as a chapel. It is now a nurseryman's, but traces of the chapel yet exist.

Very different from the plain lands, through which the road by Twyford lies, is the wild country passed on the upper road to Winchester. The road runs straight up Vernon Hill to Stephen's Castle Down and forks by Belmore House; the main road turns west, a lane continues by Preshaw House Park to the cross-roads by the "Fox and Hounds" by the Mill Barrows. This inn has a well 350 feet deep, perhaps the last remains of King Stephen's Castle. The views are worth the stiff pull-up to see them. East, west, and north roll the Downs in broken rounded lines, and south the country falls away to the wooded hills and low-lying lands by the rivers and the sea. Long may the memory last of one run down this lane to Bishop's Waltham from the cross-roads, when the

pageant of evening blazoned the western sky, and crimson lights flashed through the tree trunks, transfigured the bracken fronds, that dripped after a passing shower, into jewelled wonders, and dyed the russet woods an indescribable bronze. West of Preshaw and beyond beautiful Dur Wood, Lord Northesk's house, Longwood, stands among fine beeches, and to the south-west is Owslebury, a mile off the road, along not the best of lanes. The writer has yet to discover which is the best of lanes to reach that solitary village, for each in turn seemed worst! The church has been tinkered up by successive vicars with more zeal than artistic taste. There are some large vaults with plain iron rails—Lord Carpenter, once a private in the Horse Guards, ancestor of the Earl of Tyrconnel, is buried here—and



The Country falls away.

a rather ragged yew tree in the churchyard, from which on a clear day the Isle of Wight can be seen to the south. Altogether "Usselbury," as it is pronounced, if bleak, has attractions, distant views, fine skyscapes and grand air. Tradition declares the church was the last in the county where mass was celebrated. However that may be, it saw a scene of outrage in the name of reform when Sir Henry Seymour was lord of the manor of Marwell, for if the tales be true he had the officiating priest dragged from the building, and after rough handling at the hands of his minions, done to death. The said cleric had just cursed "openly . . . the said Sir Henry and his posterity with bell, book, and candle," which doubtless riled the passionate clown my Lord Protector had installed in distant country quarters. Local legend, to confirm and round off the story, relates that the last descendant of the sacrilegious knight was brought to the parish for pauper burial when that branch of the family fell into utter decay and destitution.

From Owslebury a lane runs by the track of the old Roman road from Portsmouth to Winchester, and at Morestead is met by the main road. A lane with good surface and easy gradients leads by Hazely Down to Twyford, turning from the highway under a tunnel of beeches by a roadside pond of the greenest and slimiest in hot summer weather, though the glossy white ducks thereon looked supremely indifferent and unaffected thereby. But the highway lies over the Downs, runs by a maze of them, another world than the plains and river meadows. Not a stream is to be seen, yet water there must be to nourish the green herbage, and the beech trees that border the road to the south. If water is not visible its work is very manifest: only its angry swirl could have fashioned these rounded spurs and grooved the gulleys that lie on either hand. With the exception of a small church, built in Norman times, there is nothing to detain one at Morestead. A mile beyond the Roman road makes a sudden and most un-Roman bend westwards towards St. Catherine's Hill with its tuft of beech trees and huge entrenchments. The suggestion that beyond Morestead Down the Roman engineers found a British trackway to the great camp and carried their causeway over it, may account for the swerve. Below on the right the valley floor is threaded with ribbons of water intersecting the sward in undulating lines, like the contours on an Ordnance map, marked mostly by only a deeper green and more luxuriant growth of meadow grasses where the tiny runlets carry their trickle from the mighty reservoirs in the chalk range.

The crest of the hill gained, the road drops through the edge of the thick wood where, when the long days merge to their summer twilight, the sunbeams play hide-and-seek with the evening shadows between the satin-smooth beech trunks; and then a turn and, suddenly, as it should be, with a burst of unexpectedness, there in the valley under the golden mists that wrap round the encircling hills, amid the deep shadow of clustering trees, a long straight line of lead roof, a low square tower—Winchester, with its old grey cathedral in its heart.

CHAPTER IV

THROUGH WINCHESTER

"Walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity."
RUSKIN, *Seven Lamps of Architecture.*

PART I.

THE old, and direct, road from London to Winchester branches from the modern highway a mile west of Alresford, and swings over the downs to meet the undeviating line of a Roman causeway some four miles from the city. Either impenetrable forest stayed the Latin road-makers, or, more probably, British trackways already led hence to the inhabitable valleys, for by the corner of Hampage Wood, where the Alresford road joins it, the Roman road ends in the air. Between this and the upper route from Bishop's Waltham the main road to Petersfield runs across the grassy downs that swell up to Chesefoot Head—the highest point hereabouts, 79 feet above the 500 reached by Telegraph Hill. Hidden in these solitudes lies Temple Valley, steep-banked, level-floored, a vast natural amphitheatre scooped out of the shelving hillsides; another Devil's Punchbowl, but without the heather that wraps the Hindhead gully. The road from Petersfield skirts round it, and then is carried along the slope of Magdalen Hill above the sheltered corner where the little village of Chilcombe nestles cosily.

In this valley, according to one writer, the great fight between Guy of Warwick and Colbrand, the giant Dane, took place. There is nothing in the story as related by the old ballad-mongers [1] to give clue to the locality, and the spot more

[1] *cf.* Ellis, *Early English Metrical Romances.*

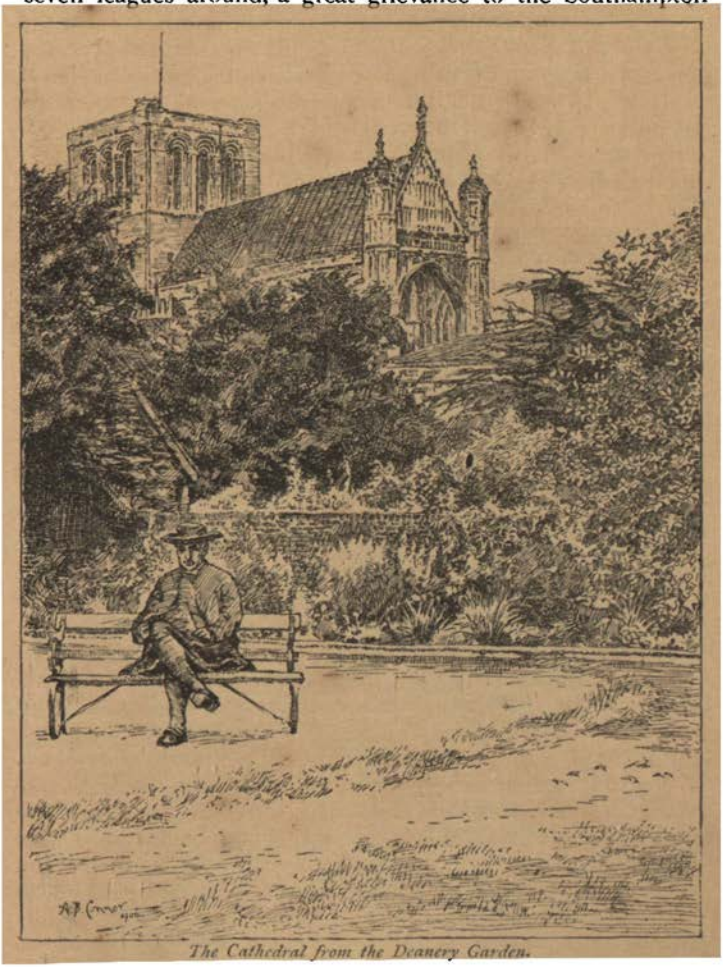
generally assigned is in the meadows between Winnall and Hyde, still called Denemarche, or Danemark Mead. Milner will have it Athelstan watched this conflict, on which hung the safety of his kingdom, from a turret on the north wall of the city. The axe with which the Saxon champion slew his foe is said to have remained till the seventeenth century where the victorious Guy placed it, on the high altar of the Cathedral. To-day the duel is an almost forgotten legend, though a public house close to the Denemarche site bore the sign of The Champions for many years, but when a certain Cardanus Riders "Made and Compiled for the Benefit of his Country" an almanac and diary entitled *Britiſh Merlin*, which certes is "bedect with Many delightful Varieties and uſeful Verities," it was considered important enough to be included among the forty-four "most remarkable paſſages of the Times, from the Creation, to this preſent Year 1680." The same authority, in a list giving "A true and plain Deſcription of the Highways in *England* and *Wales*," records :—

"From London to Southampton 64 miles, thus ;
From London to Kingſton 10 miles, thence to Cobham 5 miles, thence to Ripple 5 miles, thence to Gilford 5 miles, thence to Farnham 9 miles, thence to Alton 7 miles, thence to Ailesford 7 miles, thence to Twyford 8 miles, thence to Southampton 8 miles."

This is rather as the crow flies! Winchester is entirely ignored by Riders, though in his list of "principal Fairs," besides Weyhill and five others in the county, he mentions the great fair on St. Giles' Hill, and also that on "Mawld. hill Win." The booths and huts at Weyhill yet remain, but neither Flemings' Street, Bristol Street, the Drapery, the Pottery, nor any other is now to be seen on the Winchester fair-ground. Streets, traders and merchandise are but memories.

The fair on St. Giles' was given by William I to Bishop Walkelin, then busy with his Cathedral building. It became of great note in later times, and when Langland's Piers Plowman "went to the fair" towards the end of the fourteenth century, was one of the principal events of the year. Foreign as well as English traders brought their merchandise to the booths on the windswept hill, for the fair was rivalled only by that at Beaucaire, in Languedoc. On the eve of St. Giles, the Bishop's deputy received the keys of the city, and for the sixteen days of the fair's continuance, his officers held the

gates; all trade was prohibited, not only in Winchester, but for seven leagues around, a great grievance to the Southampton



The Cathedral from the Deanery Garden.

merchants; and the Court of Pie Poudré superseded the municipal authorities. Hence it is not surprising to find that

relations between the episcopal and civil magnates were not always of the most amiable on these occasions. Among other evidence of this is a parchment, kept with the city records, that bears the red wax seal of William Waynflete, and details a dispute between Bishop and Mayor, over the franchises and customs of St. Giles' Fair, in 1451.[1] But by this date the fair was declining, and Winchester's day of successful trade was falling to a close. Thereafter the fair on Morn, or St. Mary Magdalen's Hill, a mile to the east, proved for a time a successful rival. But the object of fairs was rapidly ceasing to be, and those that linger on are but pale ghosts of the gay and busy marts of olden days.

The four miles along the lonely downlands by the Roman road run over bare grassy spaces with no distant views for the most part. So abruptly do the hills rise, one feels assured that the crest ahead gained, Winton and her water-meadows must lie disclosed; but, instead, another fold, another rise, before sundry DANGER boards distract one's mind from the quest of a vantage-point from whence to view the Cathedral, and finally, by a notice urging cyclists to dismount, the down-land road becomes a city street, with a bad descent to the riverside. In sooth the best approach to Winchester is a debatable matter. My first, from the Forest, is now only a memory of bad roads and disappointments: my next, other than by rail, was from Farnham, along the Pilgrim's Way; but, as a dramatic introduction, this again is unsatisfactory. You are in Winton before you see it, and there is nothing to suggest the mother-city of a nation till you have crossed the irregular High Street and come down the narrow passage by the City Cross to the Cathedral. Then the sudden transition from the bustling little street with its quaint houses, its shops and traffic, to the elms and the lime-shaded quiet of the Cathedral precincts, the long, stately, grey pile, the venerable walls, and red-brick houses, creeper-smothered, of the Close, is dramatic enough. It is thus in many Cathedral cities: you pass, as at Gloucester, from tram-lines and a hustling crowd to the cloistered seclusion of past ages; the business of to-day surges up to the gateway of long-past yesterdays, often overlaps, and sometimes ruins. Trams—thank goodness!—do not

[1] The *Consuetudinarium* of the fair is to be seen among the Diocesan registers.

jangle down Winchester's streets, but the old city has lost more than one could willingly spare of her ancient buildings.

But, indeed, in view of her stormy past, it is wonderful, not that Winchester has few, but that she has any traces of antiquity to show. Cradled in her river valley, reft through the chalk backbone that stretches across the county, Winchester has watched the rolling up of page after page of our island story. Venta Belgarum developed to Winchester, the centre of Anglo-Saxon civilisation, government and culture. Royal city, busy mart, educational centre, all of these has she been, and something of each remains with the old city of memories to-day. Her history has been set forth in works of all sizes and pretensions, from a paper-covered brochure to an exhaustive, many-volumed treatise. To attempt to recount it in the space here available would but be to compile an inefficient chapter of data, for it is vastly greater than the whole of this book might compass. The bare bones of it, being mainly the history of the English nation, we once have all learnt by rote in the school-room. We have probably forgotten much, true enough!—but what matter the exact number of Saxon Kings buried in that grey fane: or how many Parliaments, and Witans before them, assembled at the old capital: what statutes were passed, Royalties born, christened, married, as well as sepulchred, within Winton's walls? Search the history books and guides to see, an you list, and placard your mind with chronological tables! The true sense of greatness, or of age, is to be no more come by through such methods than a comprehension of movement, of shifting light and colour, from the study of Bradshaw. To me, it never seems that the old ages of Hampshire are as sentient in her cities as on her wild free Downs, and in forgotten corners of her valleys, where you may get very far away from sight and sound of aught modern. So one may most feel the age of Winchester when standing above her, say on St. Catherine's Hill, especially when the sun sets behind the further ridge of downland and mist gathers in folds of grey along the valley and mingles with the thicker cloud of smoke that wells up here and there from a factory chimney—no lover of London need be instructed in the exquisite effect of smoke, plague though it be except when it holds the glory of sunset, softens down the ugliness and squalor of mean streets, and turns wider thoroughfares into strings of fairy

palaces. So the grey here creeps up and blots out the lines of slate roofs, which at clear noon do not improve the picture, and tones all to a soft consistency. As night deepens it might be a vision of old Winton, and the bugles at the barracks are the trumpets of knightly retinues, till a motor coughing along the highway, or the rumble of the boat-express from Southampton, recalls one to the actualities of twentieth-century scurry.

The Roman origin of the Cathedral is said to rest on Rudborne's fifteenth-century imagination—he did not imagine into existence the very Roman-looking head to be seen in the crypt though, nor the brick-paved drain, Roman pottery, coins, and Samian ware discovered during the present restorations. But the city unquestionably dates from Roman, and even pre-Roman times. Excavations may yet discover Celtic remains, and possibly disclose the suggested Celtic origin of the old earthworks still in existence by the workhouse, at Oram's Arbour. Barrows and earthworks of the Bronze Age dot and seam the uplands, bronze instruments have been found in the peaty layers on which the foundations of the city rest. The wide entrenchments on St. Catherine's Hill were there when the Latin advance guard first sighted the British town. To-day the little man orchis grows in the short turf, gay with many a downland flower, cattle pasture on the slopes, and browse in the vallum, in profound peace, but only a century ago the beacon fires on St. Catherine's stood ready with a nightly guard, to light the pile, should a signal flame from the south-east give warning the menaced French invasion was become a dire reality. Among the orders given to the watch was one "to be civil to the college boys when at their exercise on the hill, but not to allow them into the hut, or to pull the straw off the beacon." As early as 1564 there is mention of St. Catherine's being used as a playing ground, but there is no record of the origin of "Hills," the march of the boys in double file to the top of St. Catherine's where, marked by white lines, is—

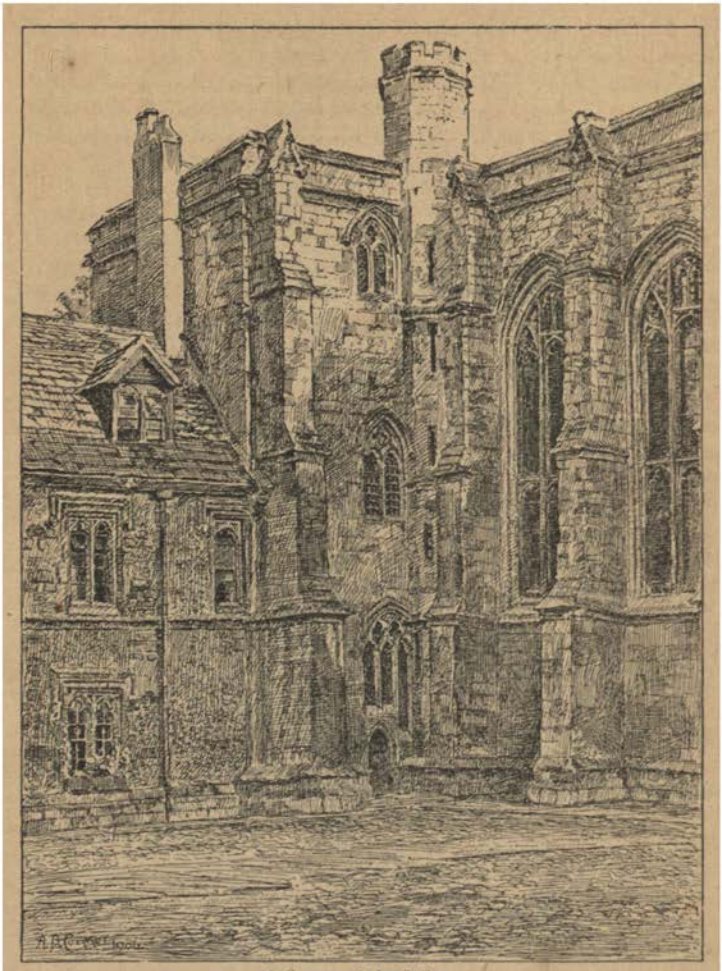
> ". . . . . a maze trod, indeed,
> Through forth-rights and meanders!"

legend has it by a schoolboy. Spending his holidays in solitary disgrace, he sought consolation in cutting these narrow trenches in the short turf,—he may possibly have re-cut them—and

writing the historic *Dulce Domum*, that generations of Wykehamists have sung round the *Domum* Tree, beneath which the youthful poet died in lonely misery.[1] The original tree has not survived, but the song is yearly sung, at the close of the midsummer term, and all Winchester resorts to the College precincts for the occasion.

Though St. Mary's College was not the first school in England it was the first modelled on college lines, where the boys and their education constituted the *raison d'être* of foundation, and thus furnished the pattern for our public schools to-day. Before Henry VI arranged the statutes of his Eton College he spent studious days in Wykeham's School, examining the statutes and observing the methods. *Manners makyth Man.* There is no lack of success to prove it. Men who left their mark on more than one generation are not far to seek if the roll of names be studied. For Wykeham was concerned with manners in the broadest sense,—there were to be no half measures—*Aut disce, aut discede, manet sors, tertia, cædi*, "Learn, leave, or be licked"—for what a man is will his manners be, and it was the making of men the old master-builder had at heart when, in the city where he had himself been educated, he founded his school in connection with his Oxford College. The buildings are solid and well fitted for their purpose; there is little ornate about them, yet they are not lacking in structural beauty. Alterations and additions have of necessity been made since the foundation-stone was laid on March 26, 1387; nearly nine years after Wykeham obtained a Bull from Pope Urban VI for "a college of seventy poor scholars, clerks, to live college-wise and study grammar, near the city of Winchester." In the interim the school was started in temporary buildings on St. Giles' Hill. The opening ceremony was a public event, and many notable visitors were present. When Cromwell's army worked havoc with Palace and Castle, the College was protected by Puritan Wykehamists, and two stood on guard with drawn swords by the founder's chantry in the Cathedral. But many valuable memorials were lost during restorations thirty years ago, for the brasses in the Chapel were taken out, stored, and—disappeared! They have been replaced by facsimiles copied from old rubbings.

[1] The legend is said to have no authentic foundation, and to date from the end of the seventeenth century.



A Corner of the College.

In retrospect they loom great on the vision, some of the famous men of our nation who once were Wykeham's sons, but here we find them in other guise, not yet on pedestals

of greatness, but very human boys. Most of us remember Bishop Ken as "the little man who would not give poor Nelly a lodging," when Charles II brought her to Winchester, and some recall that he was Izaac Walton's brother-in-law, but here in the Cloisters instead of the sturdy ecclesiastic, who penned the Morning and Evening Hymns for the College Manual, was a mischievous youth cutting "Tho. Ken. 1646" on the buttress at the north-west corner! The Poet-laureate, Thomas Warton, sinned in like manner, though the old law ran, "Let not the building be defaced with writing or carving upon it." Perhaps he was birched for this misdeed with one of the rods he had paid his shilling to purchase that Whitsuntide. But there was something of the man who tutored Erasmus in the boy Grocyn writing a Latin rhyme when a girl threw a snow-ball at him!

So in cloister and court, in the fourteenth-century brew-house, roofed with flat slabs of stone, in the muniment-room and library with their wonderful records and relics, in the audit-room with its fifteenth century tapestries,—at any rate in holiday time, when only thronging memories impinge on the silence of the peaceful hours—fancy may play among the shades and picture the tutelage of the great. They have passed, and we are passing, yet:—

"Wykeham's works are green and fresh beside the crystal spring."

He built for all time, for, even when these solid grey walls and sturdy timbers have crumbled to dust, the work of Wykeham and his sons remains, till time ceases, knit into the fabric of the Empire's life.

Centuries before the young son of John and Sibyl Longe was sent to school at Winchester by the Governor of the Castle, his patron Nicholas Uvedale, the city in the Itchen valley was renowned as a seat of learning. Saxon princes came to be tutored by the bishops, high-born youths and maidens were placed in the religious houses for instruction. The city from whence the land received name and title—England—where the first King of all England held his Court, was also, in large measure, the cradle of her literature and of her laws. Durham may claim Bede, but Alfred is Winchester's own, the greatest, most revered of her sons. Head of a struggling kingdom barely emerged from primitive inter-tribal strifes, opposed by barbaric invaders on all sides, it was his to weld a nation

hitherto lacking cohesiveness, to evolve laws for people yet unregulated, to extricate a country from social and political ignorance, to adjust events, to conquer circumstance. The world has seen more-fêted conquerors, few who have left deeper mark of their personality upon their surroundings and descendants.

"It seems to me desirable that we should turn some of the books which all men ought to know into that language which we can all understand," so Alfred decided when the Danish invaders had burnt most of the churches and their libraries, therefore, as the Norman chronicler Gaimar tells—

"He caused to write an English book of adventures and of laws and of battles, of the land and kings who made laws. And many a book caused he to be written, in which good clerks often go to read."

This "true history of the kings and their lives and memorials" was, by Alfred's orders, chained in the Cathedral Church. His "great wooden palace" stood not far from where Wykeham's College now rises above the river meads, and where the ruins of Henry de Blois' Norman castle stand by the remains of the Bishops' Palace of Wolvesey. And thus among Winton's other proud memories is the fact that the earliest official history possessed by any Teutonic people, the first English prose book, was written within her walls, even if the ancient manuscript we know to-day be not the original document that Alfred himself partly penned, but only a very early copy.

Alfred, "the delight of his people, and the dread of his enemies," was buried in the Cathedral, and thence removed to that *Newan Mynstre* he had founded near by. A relief this to such of the canons whose uneasy consciences had visioned the royal ghost "resuming its carcase" and flitting round the Cathedral precincts! So close were the two buildings that the services in each disturbed its neighbour. In 1066 the Minster was burnt and in 1109 Abbot Geoffrey moved his fraternity to the Abbey Henry I built in Hyde Mede, outside the north gate of the city, so Alfred's remains were translated to the new site and enshrined before the high altar. When Winchester was the scene of deadly strife between Stephen and Empress Maude, the fire-balls thrown from de Blois' castle set city and Hyde ablaze, and little of the reconstructed Abbey is now left—a gateway to a yard, remains of fine masonry in back garden walls

and narrow streets—for it was pulled down by Wriothesley when it fell to him at the Dissolution. Leland records that on the "tumbe" of Alfred and his son "was a late found 2 litle Tables of leade inscribid with theyr Names"; but it remained for eighteenth-century magistrates and county authorities to destroy the great king's tomb, when the foundations of their bridewell were dug, and to permit the dust and bones of the Father of the English Nation to be scattered, while what was supposed to be his coffin was broken up to mend a back alley.

Winchester's citizens owe no thanks to their more immediate progenitors that any of the old city remains to-day. Without doubt, had the dangerous state of the Cathedral fabric been ascertained a hundred and odd years ago, that grand fane would have been replaced by some Georgian monstrosity! But the danger, though only lately of public notoriety, is no new thing:—

"During at least four hundred years there has been from time to time a settlement of the east portion of the building, and the movement has been of late more marked. This is attributable partly to the insufficient buttressing of the vaulting, partly to the untrustworthy foundation—a bed of soft marl, only ten feet below the surface, permanently washed by water, which in wet seasons rises some feet above it."[1]

Bishop De Lucy's masons, when they built the retro-choir, attempted to secure some fixity for the foundations by binding the peat with layers of beech trunks, chalk and flints. Experts to-day are substituting concrete and cement—may it do its work more lastingly than the stone slab that supported the central pillar of the crypt below the Lady Chapel, which was broken through by the mighty weight superimposed above! The only marvel is that the venerable pile did not ere this collapse into splintered ruins, as the Norman tower did, if the chronicles err not, after Rufus, unblest and unregretted, had been given hurried burial below. William of Malmesbury ingenuously adds that "the building might have fallen, through imperfect construction, even though he had never been buried there," but the accepted tale of early writers is that the tower, seven years later, fell in protest! The whole matter is a disputed one. In the centre of the choir stands a plain, un-named tomb, asserted by some to be that of the Red King, by others of Henry de Blois, whose coffin, it is on record, rests under the modern

[1] Dean Furneaux in a letter to *The Times*, Nov. 8, 1906.

marble floor near the Bishop's throne. In 1868 the tomb was opened, and examined by Dr. F. W. Richards. It had been rifled by the Parliamentary troopers, but the remains had been replaced, and the slab mortared down. Now Stowe wrote that Rufus was buried "under a playne flat marble stone, before the lecterne in the queere, but long since his bones were translated in a coffer and layd with King Canute's bones," which, if Stowe and the inscription on one of the beautiful mortuary chests above the choir screen speak truly, was enough to bring the Danish King's wraith back in indignant rage at the intrusion of such bad company! All those present at the opening of the tomb, in 1868, appear to have been satisfied that what they therein saw were the remains of William II. On the other hand, Dean Kitchen was as firmly convinced that they were *not*. Read through the evidence of either party, and it is irrefutable—till you read the arguments on the other side! For myself, it must be confessed, I—

> ". . . . . heard great argument
> About it and about, but evermore
> Came out by the same door where in I went,"

till it was suggested to me by one authority that the tower never fell! After that I gave the problem up as insolvable.

Henry IV's complaint anent the uneasiness of "a head that wears a crown,"[1] has been practically demonstrated in old Winton, even when life was extinct; for few of the Royal dead have been left in their original tombs. Saintly Alfred, evil Rufus, a like fate to both. Nor did Alfred's great tutor Swithun, Bishop and patron saint of the Cathedral, escape disturbance when laid to rest beneath the turf, "under the drip of the eaves," as he desired to be. The rain legend is by no means peculiar to the Saxon Bishop. There are five or six other saints with rainy propensities in the British Isles, and similar tales attach to saints in Flanders, Germany, Tuscany, and Italy. It is probable that the aged Bishop's wish to be "where the rain of heaven might fall upon him," attached the old myth to his name, though tradition explains it on the score that he signalled his displeasure by forty days' downpour when it was first attempted to remove his remains to a shrine within the Cathedral. It is curious in how many lands funeral

[1] *King Henry IV*, Pt. II. iii. 1.

obsequies are regarded as possessing some occult influence over the rainfall, and that dead men's bones have rain-making value in the eyes of the wizard and his clients. Many miracles that attended the removal of his bones to Athelwold's Cathedral are related in the *Gloucester Fragments*, an Anglo-Saxon life of St. Swithun. One legend has had some degree of confirmation, that of the old smith who saw the saint in vision rescinding his order to be left in the churchyard, and prayed the iron ring in the stone coffin might come out if the dream were true. The ring came away at a touch, but when the staple was replaced, no one could move it again! During some of Dean Kitchen's excavations a ring and staple *were* discovered just where the old Bishop was reported to have been buried.

Bishop Athelwold did more than rebuild the Cathedral and enshrine St. Swithun's bones within it, for it was he gave the Canons their choice between accepting the Benedictine cowl and rule or quitting their stalls. The Canons were secular, and married. It appears that the ladies were not unconcerned with the troubles. The change was not effected without disputations, but, chronicled his fellow monk of Glastonbury, "the image of our Saviour, speaking decidedly, confounded the Canons and their party," in the synod convened to settle the matter. After Athelwold's death, the secular Canons tried to recover their old footing, but fruitlessly, for they had Dunstan to deal with. The Malmesbury scribe unconsciously explained the miracles that attended the inauguration of Dunstan's reforms when he wrote that the Canons of Worcester were not "driven out by force, but circumvented by pious fraud."

The life of St. Athelwold was written by Wolstan, a Benedictine monk, who was a singer in the Cathedral. From him we learn one reason why the services in the Cathedral must have disturbed those in the adjoining building, for he tells us the organ was so powerful "the music is heard throughout the town." Elphege's tenth-century organ was an immense and complicated construction, that required two organists, and no less than "seventy strong men" to blow the twenty-six bellows —this is as bad as the peal of five bells at Canterbury that required sixty-three men to ring them!

"We are told that the instrument contained the seven degrees of the scale, mixed with the lyric semitone, on B flat. There were forty tongues or keys, each of which controlled ten pipes, and were opened or closed as required

by the organists. Stops were not invented till many centuries later, so that all the ten pipes spoke at once, in technical language, nothing less than the 'full organ' could be used."[1]

Poor author of *On the Harmony of Sounds!* No wonder that in his descriptive poem Wolstan declared, "like thunder the iron tones batter the ear . . . that everyone stops with his hand his gaping ears!"

Something of the buildings these fine old Saxons knew can be seen yet, the well beneath the altar in the crypt, fragments of old stonework collected in the feretory, and the massive wall on the south of the Yard to the Slype, the narrow passage at the south-west corner of the Cathedral. The profits and herbage of the graveyard used to be the perquisites of the organist. Before 1710 the ground was rented during fair time for sheep-pens. Rails were put up to prevent coaches driving over the graves; and down to comparatively recent years the pasture was let to a local butcher! Dean Kitchen removed the old wall on the north-east of the grounds and substituted the iron railings, now utilised by the inhabitants of what the Dean called, in his "begging letter" in *The Hampshire Chronicle*, "that somewhat forsaken district of the city," to hang their family laundry upon!

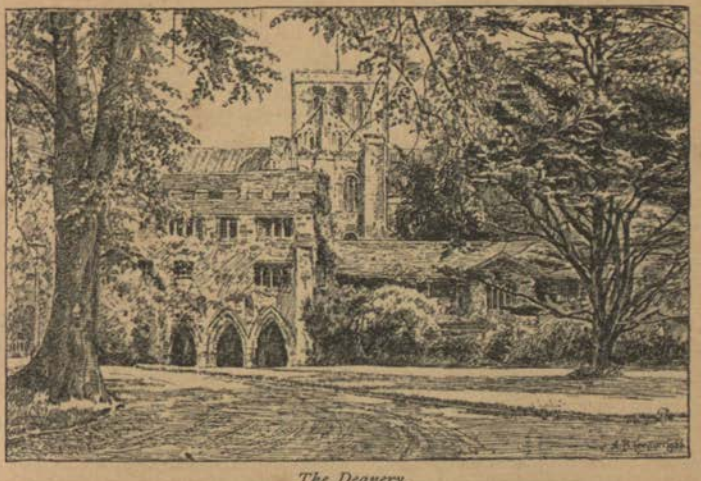
It has been said, and with truth, that to get the full effect of detail one should visit the Cathedral after a snowfall has turned it into a mass of black and white against the cold blue of the winter sky, or rime frost has flung fantastic jewelled patterns over the grey walls, and touched the Norman mouldings with fairy lines of white. Then the great building stands out with every detail distinct as in a photograph, and you get the full value of the fine Perpendicular west front, with its great window set above the recessed and vaulted porch, its niches—empty, alas!—its panels and crocketed pinnacles, like those at the east end of the choir with its graceful flying buttresses. But best I love it when the limes are blossoming, for then through the open doorways the hum of bees comes softly, and the hot sunshine filters through the "twilight saints and dim emblazonings" of windows—

"Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes."

The mellow stone-tints throw up the deep richness of the

[1] *cf.* C. F. Abdy Williams, *Story of the Organ*, pp. 30–1, 57.

finely carved wood of screen and stalls, and in all the harmony of colour the most beautiful note is furnished by the blue introduced into the South African war memorial window and tablets. Nowadays blue is so regrettably rare in our churches, yet nothing blends better with the duns and greys of stone—see how exquisite is the effect of the greeny-blue between the interlacing stonework of the roof of Wykeham's chantry, like white thorns enmeshed against a turquoise sky. The extreme length of the building gives a curiously narrow effect to the nave, and the size of the piers is hardly realised till one stands



The Deanery.

by them to note the height to the lierne vaulting overhead. Wykeham rebuilt the roof with the original timbers Walkelin used. We do not grow such oaks nowadays, sad to say, for during restorations nine years ago it was impossible to get English timber of sufficient size, and the beams required to replace some of the worn-out eleventh-century woodwork had to be imported from Stettin. One realises in a measure the vastness of the project the old Norman builders faced when one reads of 9,000 cubic feet of timber, 25 tons of iron, and over 100 tons of lead recast and relaid! No wonder the nave

piers are massive, but the weight they uphold is not the only reason for this. Their great girth is largely due to the wonderful method of reconstruction adopted by Wykeham, an architectural *tour de force*, for when he continued his predecessor's work of rebuilding, he did not destroy Walkelin's work, which, in William of Malmesbury's words, "surpassing fame, will resist the power of oblivion"; it is here to-day, the core of the great building cased in Wykeham's fourteenth-century work. The manner of transformation can be seen at the north-east of the nave, where the rood screen originally hid the Norman work now left in view. There is much of the earlier work untouched in the transepts. You can see the very doorway through which hundreds of pilgrims passed to the shrine of St. Swithun long before any took the Old Way to Canterbury, and the gates, the oldest existing grill-work in England they say, that guarded the approach to the shrine, from the south transept are here yet; and part of the Old Pilgrims' Hall, which dates probably from the middle of the fourteenth century, stands 100 yards to the south-east of the Deanery. It is now a stable.

Cromwell—Thomas of that ilk, not Oliver—is responsible for the destruction of St. Swithun's shrine, and for quite as much other damage as later on his Puritan namesake effected. "About 3 o'c. in the morning we made an end of the shrine here," his emissaries reported. "The mayor with eight or nine of his brethren and the Bishop's Chancellor, Mr. doctor Crawford, with a good appearance of honest personages besides," assisted Master Pollard with the spoilation. Then were lost to Winchester "the cross of emeralds, the cross called 'Hierusalem,'" another of gold, and much more.

But the Cathedral and its beauties, its architectural treasures, its mighty memories, is theme too great to embark on further. To tell the tales of the somewhat mixed collection of saints and sinners represented on the great screen alone would fill pages. It pleases me always to see Izaak Walton there, holding his fish by the tail, not far from "St. Peter, . . . and St. John, whom we know were all fishers." The kindly old angler lies in Prior Silkstede's chantry under the grey slab that bears Ken's lines—they should have added his own words, "an excellent angler, and now with God." Then there is the library with its store of treasures on which old Bishop Morley

gazes down serenely; the many chantries, the mortuary chests, the great font with its curious old carving, most elaborate of the five fonts in the county of black marble from Tournay, and much, much more; but other corners of Winton call for some passing note, even if we leave the Close with its old gateway, by the black-and-white gabled front of Cheyney Court, near the Deanery with its three-arched entry, the

Cheyne Court.

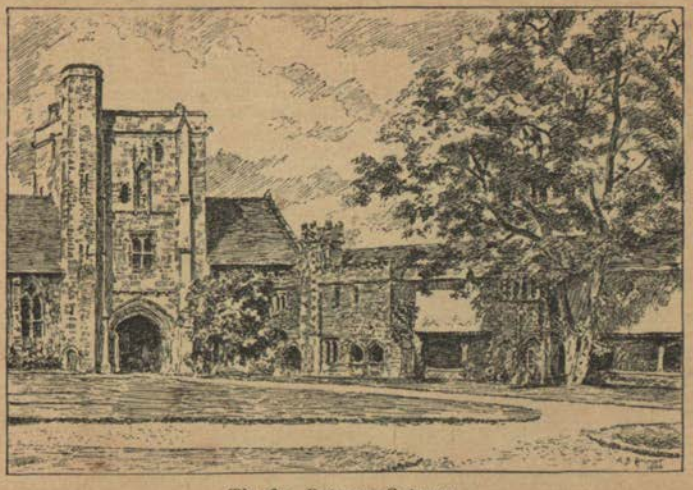
old houses of mellowed brick, and the gardens. No, Winchester's gardens must have a word, they are so characteristic of the old city. Why, the very turf is of that quality that can only be had when, as the well-worn Oxford yarn has it, "we rolls' un and we mows' un for a thousand year, and then it just comes." And the roses!—they are everywhere, hung in masses over old brick wall and lichen-stained stonework, by the clinging ivy and long trails of virginia creeper.

PART II

Set in gardens just above the green pastures where, a mile or so to the south, silver Itchen twists and turns, is the beautiful old-world Hospital of St. Cross, with its notable church. It lies off the highway from Southampton, but the modern builder has done much to ruin the once charming village, and those who take no delight in brick villas had best avoid Southgate Street and come hither by the cinder-strewn path through the river meadows.

There are very early records of hospitals in Hampshire—Winchester had St. Brinstan's before 935—but St. Cross is the earliest foundation of those still in existence. It was built by Henry de Blois in 1136, as a refuge for "thirteen poor impotent men, so reduced in strength as rarely or never to be able to raise themselves without the assistance of one another"; while food was to be provided for 100 other pensioners. For many years the authorities seem to have been engaged in squabbling, and pocketing the income, rather than tending the poor the founder wished to benefit. We read of Masters such as Geoffrey de Welleford and Bertrand de Asserio—who never so much as saw the buildings—or a boy pluralist whose only merit lay in the accident of being Bishop Edington's nephew. To Edington, it will be remembered, is credited the origin of one of Hampshire's proverbs—"Though Canterbury is the highest rack, Winchester has the deepest manger." The Bishop had been Master of St. Cross and began some needful rebuilding, for in those days of neglect the Hospital fell into decay and one by one the pensioners were scattered. Wykeham did his energetic best to right matters, but it remained for Cardinal Beaufort to restore de Blois' foundation, and endow a Brotherhood of Noble Poverty, mainly for the benefit of his own retainers. Mismanagement and wrongful appropriation of monies did not end with Beaufort's reforms. The favoured charity of the great Lancastrian found scant favour in Yorkist eyes, and had it not been for Bishop Waynflete's efforts St. Cross might have perished. Yet it survived storm and trouble and lasted on till, in 1857, after the exposure of sundry abuses in the Queen's Bench, the whole scheme was revised and placed on its present footing under trustees.

It is Beaufort's work one sees on passing into the forecourt, by the buttery hatch where, to this day, wayfarers may have for the asking ale in horn cups, bread on wooden platters, but no longer home brewed and baked. You pass through the fine entrance gateway into a quadrangle, where such an air of ancient peace lingers as one must go sadly far to seek nowadays. The Brothers—with silver cross conspicuous on the left breast of their quaint garb, black for those on de Blois' foundation, Cardinal's red for the Brethren of Noble Poverty—sit on the old benches, work in their garden plots, or guide the visitor over



The fine Entrance Gateway.

the well-kept grounds and beautiful old buildings. One for many years took especial pride in pointing out the "leopard's window," till a visitor published a captious paragraph about the poor old fellow's mistaken rendering of *leper's* window. This came to the Brother's ears, and never thereafter would he take his turn as guide, heartbroken at his mistake thus rudely brought home to him.

St. Cross was not a lepers' hospital, though there were several in the county in old days, as St. Mary Magdalen's, on Morn Hill, founded at the end of the twelfth century,

for eighteen lepers or other sick persons, by Bishop Toclive, of Ilchester, it is said in expiation of his treatment of Thomas à Becket. After his Dutch war, Charles II used the building for prisoners, and the pensioners were boarded out in the city. Later, what remained of the old building was pulled down. In the thirteenth century Alderman John Devenishe founded St. John the Baptist's Hospital, and the restored chapel and fine modern hall stand by the almshouses at the corner of Eastgate and High Street.

The Church of St. Cross is one of the finest specimens of

The Hall, St. Cross.

the Transitional Norman period, marred though it has been by a mistaken attempt to reproduce old colouring, which entirely destroys the light and shade effects that relieve the massiveness of Norman work. Apart from this there are many treasures of architectural art. Besides the excellent Transition work there are good specimens of later styles, Early English in the nave, some windows, and the north porch, Decorated in the west front. The church stands at the south side of the quadrangle, de Blois' Hospital, of which only traces are left, stood on the further side, where the curious triple arch is to be seen.

To the west of the grass plot are the Brethren's Houses, a long two-storied, tall-chimneyed row, built by Beaufort, as was the Master's House that joins them to the lofty hall and the gateway. The square is completed by the ambulatory, a sixteenth-century building, with infirmary above—where the "leopard's window" looks into the north transept. Behind it is the Master's garden, a dream of old-world beauty, with reed-bordered fish stew full of broad lily pads. A serener setting for the close of a long life's day than St. Cross, in its gardens by the water-meadows, would indeed, be hard to find.

You get a charming view of the Hospital from the cinder path, if you turn near a little sluice that lets out the water from a cutting over the meadows, with their clumps of yellow iris, red-brown sorrel, rush and osiers, where the sedge-warblers nest, by the river side. Beyond Itchen and its disused Navigation Canal, rises the white scarp of chalk pits that gird the foot of St. Catherine's. From this side the brick villas do not so completely smother what remains of the little village of St. Cross, bits of old timber and rich red brick, mossy tiles and irregular gables show among the trees—behind the lines of slate roofs on modern bilious-hued constructions—and gardens where orange lilies, the crimson rambler rose, blue lupins and masses of white marguerites give added gladness to the summer day.

The path leads to Wolvesey, de Blois' Castle, a ruin now. The square and massive Norman keep is a crumbling wreck, where wallflower and ivy find precarious holding. After Winchester fell to victorious Oliver in 1646 the Bishops' Castle was slighted. The solemn-looking building that stands by the ruins is part of the palace Wren designed, commenced by Bishop Morley—who also built and endowed the college for clergymen's widows, to the north of the Cathedral—and completed by Bishop Trelawney. The south wing was afterwards pulled down by Brownlow North—the Bishop who examined candidates for ordination on the cricket field! The Winchester prelate, by the way, was not the hero of the well-known couplet :—

> "And shall Trelawney die, and shall Trelawney die?
> Then thirty thousand Cornish boys will know the reason why."

The Trelawney of the lines Hawker set to a popular air was a

Royalist commander in the Civil War, but doubtless they were sung when the Bishop, Sir Jonathan of that ilk, had the honour to be with three other Wykehamists, Ken, Lloyd, and Turner, among the Seven Bishops.

The grounds are partly enclosed by a portion of the city wall, and a fine fragment it is, but its novel setting is somewhat incongruous. The venerable grey flints and old red brick-work would be impressive enough rising from well-kept sward, but there is a meretricious air about the gravelled path, wound in

The Ambulatory, St. Cross.

senseless curves between iron rails and beds, planted with ornamental shrubs, yuccas, and bamboos. The path leads by the Weirs, and the beautiful single-span bridge is one of the most artistically perfect pictures in the city. Free water this, as many a youthful angler with primitive tackle testifies, and all there is free on the whole of the strictly-preserved river. Turning over the bridge to Cheesehill, the modern version of *Chesul* Street, you come on some of the oldest houses left in Winchester. Behind the Georgian frontage of the house next

to the church is hidden much of the original half-timber building where Thomas Fleming lived, before he became Lord Chief Justice, when Recorder of Winchester. The old house on the opposite side was at one time the Rectory House, and dates from 1450. It has been recently restored in fifteenth-century style. Winton's first Sunday School was held there, by a shoemaker named Adams. The church, St. Peter's, is interesting and parts date to Norman times. St. John's in the Soke[1] is of the same period, and is the most noteworthy parish church in the city, for besides details of architectural interest, Early English and Perpendicular work, it was there the twenty boys who were the first of Wykeham's scholars originally attended.

Early in 1599 "the north parte of Eastgate Bridge fell," we read in the city records, and was rebuilt by "taxacion of the inhabitants of the cittye and the voluntary contribucions of divers friends of the cittye." About two hundred years later the old Eastgate was removed, on the plea that it obstructed traffic. Bridge Street opens into a wide space where the millenary statue of King Alfred stands, and beyond is the new Town Hall, wherein the many valuable charters and records after decades of neglect are fitly stored. Nothing less than criminal was the carelessness with which the old documents were treated. Remember Winchester's age and history! Her Guild merchant was founded by Ethelwulf in 856. As a municipality she is senior even to London. This is admitted by courtesy, for she has lost the evidence that should prove her claim. The losses are irreparable, many treasures destroyed, many passed to other hands, such as her special survey, the *Liber Winton*—Winchester it will be remembered was not included in the Domesday Book though that was compiled here. Yet there remains much material from which may be gathered details of life in the old city many centuries ago, in addition to the forty-seven charters and manuscripts, dating from Henry II's charter, 1155–62, to one from George III, 1763. Most interesting of all is a roll of the City Usages, six and a half feet long, dating probably from

[1] The Bishops' Liberty of the Soke included all the suburbs without the walls. That part of the Liberty which included the parishes of St. John's and St. Peter's Cheesehill, was a busy corner with many mills, clothmakers, and wool merchants. There were fulling mills at King's Worthy, and some old sheds retained the name till within the last fifty years, a reminder of Winchester's great cloth industry that ended in Stuart times.

early in the reign of Henry VI. and evidently a copy of an older document.

The customal proceeds to tell how the Mayor shall be *chose by the comunis gaderynge, and daderynge and grauntynge of the foure and twenty*, and *be out put* from year to year; also how the twenty-four should be elected, and the 2 *Bailiffs and the* 4 *Serjeants*, who should be swords *berynge, for to do the hestes of the Maire.* It rules how only those *of the franchise* shall *make burels*, a coarse kind of red cloth, or buy *sain green*, with many other matters of make and barter. Some of the tolls imposed are distinctly odd and the list is long and detailed; the privileges of the franchised are accentuated by the tolls on those out of the franchise. Apropos of the sword-*berynge* serjeants, a presentment in later times is comic reading and proves it was not safe to jest at city magnates and customs:—

Civtias Winton. The information of Robert Tarleton, Sergt. at mace of the said citty, upon oath this 3rd day of Sept., 1722. This informant saith on his oath that on Friday the 31st of August last, about an hour after His Majesty passed through the said citty, he saw Anthony Newman, junior, carry in procession on his shoulder a large cabbage with the roots on to it before George Todd, of the said citty, victualler, in the Middle Brooks, and that he saw it brought out of the Red Lyon ale-house and carried before the said George Todd towards his own house, and he verilie believes it was carried before the said George Todd by the said Newman with an intent to ridicule the maior and aldermen of ye said citty, who had just before carried their mace before his Majesty.

Among regulations concerning the highways we find in 1562 "that no person from henceforthe laye annye dedd dogge, horse, or annye other ded carreyne in any strete or highwaye of the cytye"! That the rule was needful, and also frequently transgressed, is evident from subsequent presentments. Some good folk of Winton were fined for "making a dung hill in the lane by Whales Bone Bridge which is annoyance," or "for that their servants do laye their fylthy potte in the way by St. Peter's Church," others for killing young calves, "brewing and baking and typling the same in hys house" without licensed right so to do, a serious matter that might entail a heavy fine.

Many were presented because they "have not resorted to their p'ish church by the space of one month last past," or "for letting their dogges be abrod wōut mossel contrary to the ordinance of the city"—this cost the offenders 6d. Also were they fined when they had "not frequented archerie, nor used to shoot on long bowes by the space of one month, contrary to the statute thereupon made." Yet some people have asserted that any compulsory military training is "un-English"!

We might go on indefinitely quoting from the old papers, but we must out into the sunshine again, and up the narrow High Street that rises somewhat steeply to the Westgate, past the old Pent House or Piazza, with projecting front supported by squat Tuscan pillars. Underneath there in old days the farm folk displayed their country produce for sale. The Pent House extended to Market Street. Opposite was St. Mary Kalender's Church, the mother-church of Winchester. Being in a ruinous condition in 1673, the parish was joined with that of St. Lawrence and contributed half the funds for the rebuilding of the latter church, once the chapel of the old Norman palace. Here, by the beautiful City Cross, with its shafts and pinnacles —once coated with paint by the Pavement Commissioners, who sold it to Mr. Lee Dummer!—stood the old tenements known as Heaven and Helle. The Conqueror's Palace was burnt during the Civil War in 1102. The salvage was used to build Wolvesey.

"Prill of ffyre" was an ever-present terror in the days of timber houses and thatched roofs. Half the city was burnt when Savaric de Mauleon, left in command by John, fired it at the approach of Louis the Dauphin, to whom Saer de Quincey, Earl of Winchester, had offered the crown. Savaric held Wolvesey for ten days before he surrendered. But Winchester has not suffered from fire to the extent other towns in the county have done. Possibly more precautions were taken. We find in 1574, "for avoydinge of the prill of ffyre yt ys agreed that everie one of the xxiiij . . . shall have readie in his house one letherne buckett." The twenty four leather buckets were superseded ninety years later by an engine with "Crooks, ladders, and buckets." The last great fire was in 1894 when, it will be remembered, the palace that was designed for Charles II was almost completely destroyed early in the morning of Dec. 19th. Charles took great interest in its construction, but died before

the fine scheme was half executed, and the shell of the palace was eventually turned into barracks. The Merry Monarch came often to watch the progress of the building, and it was on one such occasion that the episode of Prebendary Ken and the erstwhile orange girl of Old Drury occurred. Nell, on her visits to the city, lodged in a house in Colebrook Street, now pulled down. This, in 1777, was still "the genteelest neighbourhood of Winchester." The palace was to have replaced the old Castle which, after Oliver Cromwell had battered its walls, became a mere quarry from whence the Corporation sold stone for building purposes. To what remains of it, the historic Great Hall, we must now proceed, though half the stories of the High Street are not even referred to, and the Tudor House by the Butter Cross and another Tudor building, Godbegot House, on the opposite side, suggest there should be many. Here was the old Meat Market, the shambles off Fleshmonger Street. Canute's Queen gave this manor of Godbiete, with the sanctuary church of St. Peter in Macellis, to St. Swithun's. Pass round the narrow passage behind and you come on old brick walls and solid timbers far more suggestive of old Winchester than the High Street frontages. An alley leads up to where a large modern hotel stands on the site of one of the ancient inns, though the old White Hart has vanished from the narrow passage to Little Minster Street. The original George, or Great Inn, was once the Moon—that dated back to Edwardian times. In Elizabeth's day the charge at the George for a feather-bed for one night was a penny! Dinner, of "Beef mutton or pigge or fish," cost sixpence. The names of the forty-six rooms at the George in 1655 have been preserved in the inventory of a tenant. The majority were names of inn signs, such as the Adam and Eve, Nag's Head, Cross Keys, Bell, Star, and so forth, but No. 27 was "the room next the Beer Cellar," and No. 26 "Mr. Atkins' Room."

. . . . .

"2nd May 1656, taken out of the cofers to pay Sir William Waller for the purchase of the Castle with the appurtenances and other materials thereunto belonging the sum of three score pounds."

The entry tells its own tale. Winchester fallen from her high estate, her Cathedral desecrated, the enemy triumphant

within her gates. The Great Hall remains to suggest what the city then lost, and in it hangs a treasure that, be it what it may, is of unique interest—

> "The rounde Table at Wyn'ter beganne,
> And there it ended, and there it hangeth yet." [1]

There were sceptics in the fifteenth century, when Caxton published *Morte d'Arthur*, and quoted this table in proof of the story, but it was sufficient of a curiosity in 1522 for Henry VIII to exhibit it to his guest the Emperor Charles. Philistines existed in those days also, for, as the paintings were much worn, it is said the table was redecorated for the occasion! Stowe, in his *Annals*, quotes the Latin lines written to commemorate this royal visit, but no longer visible on the table—

"*Carolus, Henricus vivant; Defensor uterque; Henricus fidei, Carolus Ecclesiæ.*"

The memories connected with the fine old Early English Hall are second only to those of the Cathedral itself. Here, for centuries, Parliaments met, weighty statutes have been framed, justice has been administered. The two most notable trials were, of course, those of Sir Walter Raleigh and Dame Alicia Lisle. Of both it may be said, in the words of one of Raleigh's vituperative judges, [2] "There was nothing here but a kind of confusion and hotch-potch of justice."

"All my good turns forgotten; all my errors revived and expounded to all extremity of ill. All my services, hazards, and expenses for my country—plantings, discoveries, fights, councils, and whatsoever else—malice hath now covered over. I am made an enemy and traitor by the word of an unworthy man. He hath proclaimed me to be a partaker of his vain imaginings, notwithstanding the whole course of my life hath approved the contrary, as my death shall approve it."

Thus Raleigh wrote to his wife, when awaiting unmerited trial, wherein the shameful parody of justice, the trickeries and lies, were equalled only by the brutality of the scene when, eighty-two years later, foul-mouthed Jeffreys condemned the aged wife of John Lisle to a shameful death. From one of the windows of the Castle Raleigh watched the extraordinary spectacle

[1] John Hardyng's *Chronicles*.
[2] Attorney General Coke, when speaking of the provincial council of Wales.

when his so-called accomplices one by one were brought to the very block, and confronted with the terror of imminent death, that more evidence against him might be wrung from them ere they knew themselves pardoned—a farce in the case of the perjured Cobham played with unctuous exaggeration. Many weary years were to elapse while Raleigh, captive in the Tower, wrote his *History of the World*, before the disgraceful sentence passed on him at Winchester was carried to fatal issue if not in all brutality of detail.

In 1797 remains of the square, flint-rubble towers that stood at the corners of the inner bailey were discovered, and some of the old passages remain from the outer bailey to the sally port near the Westgate, and from the Round Tower into the Castle ditch on the east. When the old Plume of Feathers by the Westgate was pulled down some Norman work was found, remains of the church of St. Mary in the Fosse, and these stones were used in rebuilding the inn. It once was the Porter's Lodge for Westgate, where debtors and minor criminals were imprisoned, vagrants were stowed in the Black Hole by the stairway that leads up to what is now a museum. The prisoners did not have the easiest of times. So long as they could not escape it was a matter of indifference to most people what happened to them. Men and women were herded together and scant attention was paid even to vital needs. For instance, in 1727, one Joseph Shefley petitioned the Court of Quarter Sessions that he was "likely to starve by reason that the sergeants of the city for some time past have absented themselves and not come nigh him." After this they were ordered to attend in turn once a day! Possibly they had been better entertained setting eighteenth-century police traps, for a by-law had been promulgated by the Common Crier to the effect that a fine of six and eightpence would be inflicted on any "horseler or other persons who rode at a gallopp on any horse, gelding, or mare in the streets or lanes"!

The room over the Westgate—which is, according to Parker, "a valuable specimen of military architecture of the time of Henry III"—was turned into a museum in 1898. It is a low, rough room with a Tudor mantle, and in the west wall two loopholes, like immense inverted keyholes. It was in the huge iron-clamped coffer, the common chest of the city in days of yore, that many of the ancient records were long thrust

neglected away, others were found in the old cupboards, damp and mildewed. Fetters, obsolete weapons and other curios hang on the chalk walls, and in one corner is rather a rough outline of a figure made in hoop iron which is a set of the chains in which felons were hung. Here is the Moot horn, the largest and oldest in the kingdom, Winchester proudly asserts, and a unique set of standard weights, including the famous bushel. Through the more modern windows in the eastern wall one looks down the steep and narrow High Street with the town clock Sir William Paulet, member for the city, gave in 1713, jutting out from the old Guildhall, much in evidence above Queen Anne's leaden statue. One does not easily picture the older city, despite the quaint prints in the Museum in the Square, and from here there is nothing to suggest such dramatic scenes as Earl Waltheof being led forth from the Castle to die on St. Giles' Hill; or the Empress Maude escaping to Ludgershall, carried in a coffin from the Castle which she had held for seven disastrous weeks, wherein perished the Abbey of St. Mary's, St. Grimbald's Monastery, Hyde Abbey and twenty churches; and the modern buildings spreading up the further hill-side know nought of John, weeping in the dust of the Alresford road, at the feet of Archbishop Langton, and the penitential procession back to the Chapter House, where, from the hands of the man he had wronged, the wretched king had absolution.

Without the Gate is the Monument erected by the Charitable Society of Natives in 1759 and rebuilt in 1821. The Society was founded to relieve the survivors in distressful circumstances after the Great Plague, which in 1666 ravaged Winchester despite sundry very severe regulations for watch and ward at the gates to prevent infection being brought to the city. The obelisk was built on the base of an old fifteenth-century processional cross, where bowls of water and vinegar were placed for buyers to drop their money into during that terrible visitation, for the country folk durst hardly bring fresh food to the gates and none dared touch another lest the dread infection be conveyed. That mart outside the stricken city appeals to one's imagination, death and terror within those grey walls, the fresh free country without, though not even in country solitude was safety from the Plague, as Hampshire knew, for when the Black Death smote the land hardly a soul in the

In the Master's Garden, St. Cross.

little village of Weeke survived. Weeke lies by the highway to Stockbridge that turns to the north-west beyond the gate. A

year ago the old cottages by the church were destroyed by fire. The small church, St. Mary the Virgin's, has a quaint fifteenth-century brass, showing St. Christopher carrying the Infant Christ, and there is—or was—a mural tablet to William and Betty Blake. Betty was a daughter of Sir Hugh Stewkeley of Hinton Ampner, and married one of his servants. Whether William made money afterwards or his wife had some independent fortune I know not, but Blake, when a widower, left funds to endow a school at his wife's old home and to perpetuate her memory by an annual dole.

A far more extraordinary story of matrimonial adventures is connected with Lainston House, a mile and a half further along the road. In 1744 beautiful Elizabeth Chudleigh was brought by her aunt on a visit to the Merrills of Lainston, and at the Winchester Races met the Hon. Augustus Hervey, who promptly fell a victim to her charms. Piqued at the apparent silence of her lover, the Duke of Hamilton—the aunt was responsible for the non-arrival of his letters—Elizabeth agreed to a marriage with young Hervey in the private chapel at Lainston, kept secret at the time, and, as they were not long about quarrelling bitterly, never acknowledged. Years later "Miss Chudleigh" hurried to Winchester and forced the dying Rector, Mr. Amis, to enter the marriage in the Lainston register, an act which she, as Duchess of Kingston, must have lived to regret when, in the notorious bigamy trial, it proved damaging evidence against her.

The Stockbridge road, hilly and with a surface none of the best, runs over somewhat bleak and exposed country, but for a day's excursion from Winchester, afar from highways, one can hardly better for delightful variety of scene a ramble along the byways, often rough, that lead with many ups and downs through Dean and Sparsholt to the secluded villages of Ashley and the Sombornes, returning by the wild tracks over Ashley Down. You are never more than five miles, in a bee-line, from a railway, but at times you are centuries away from twentieth-century progress. From Ham Green, below Sparsholt, there are vistas of distant downs and woodlands, and a rough road leads south to Crab Wood, by a wild bit of land where, when I wandered there one September day, a wealth of wild flowers strangled a poor crop of roots under gay masses of mauve, white and yellow blossom, while the ultramarine-blue

of the bugloss made vivid contrast. Sparsholt Church is an Early English building, carefully restored in 1882, when a chalice and pattern were "found in a priest's grave" in the churchyard, as the notice of their gift to the church, by the Rev. E. D. Heathcote, records. The initials cut on the arch in the south porch, with dates as early as 1630, show, as do those in the College Cloister, that destructive youth does not change its methods of mischief very greatly with the passing centuries. Any change, though, comes slowly in such villages as this or the Sombornes—there are three of the name, Upper, Little, and King's Somborne. The last named certainly displays every variety of Hampshire architecture: here a chalk wall with thatched or tiled bonnet, there a wall of flints, grey enough to have come from the Cotswolds, anon old brick and, it must be confessed, new also. The cottages are as varied as the walls, some front direct on to the street, some stand back in bowers of trees or garden plots. The tiles of one homestead are stained orange with lichen, the next are browned with mosses. The thatched roofs range from yellow newness to every shade of old grey-brown, broken and pitted with birds' nests. Black-and-white houses, timber-framed dwellings, weather-worn or colour-washed mud walls, many gables, clustering chimney-stacks, creeper-covered cottages or new-built villa—blushingly conscious of staring and uncompromising hideosity!—or perhaps with only a new frontage set before an age-old building, all are here to be seen and sketched. The smell of burning wood mingles pleasantly with the perfume of lilies and sweet peas in the gardens, good old-fashioned country scents, that make one think of cherry cheeks, print bonnets, and new milk! An open drain, by courtesy a stream, trickles down the village street, weed-grown and almost dry in hot summers, but the number of foot-bridges suggest in wet weather it assumes a respectable size.

This rural corner was, and partly remains, royal property, but only a few stones remain of John of Gaunt's palace. The ancient stone coffin in the church is by tradition assigned to William Briwere, "a noted man in Hampshire"[1] in twelfth-century days. The church has been much restored, but the chancel dates to the Decorated, and the nave and font to the Transitional

[1] T. W. Shore, *A History of Hampshire*, p. 119.

Norman period. Far less suggestive of the restorer's hand is the little Norman church at Ashley, the quietest and quaintest of remote villages. From the wicket-gate of the small porch to the narrow chancel arch everything has a simple and venerable air. The alms box, cut in the solid oak pillar at the bench-end, looks as though it ought to bear an earlier date than 1595. There is also some old work to be seen in the small church of Little Somborne; the masonry in the north wall is certainly suggestive of a period previous to Early English.

The lane along which the not very numerous cottages—ivy-covered and thatched—of Ashley are gathered, by many a shady old ash, twists up the hill-side till on Ashley Down it joins the line of the Roman causeway from Winchester to Old Sarum. Many Roman remains have been discovered by this once important thoroughfare. Now the pheasant is lord of the woods, the sheep crop the upland pasture undisturbed but by the occasional rattle of the butcher's cart, the jangle of the ubiquitous cyclist, and the distant echo of motor and train, for it has become a most neglected byway, but one to be loved entirely by those who seek for beauty of scene, or sweet peacefulness. Rough tracks lead through beechen woods, or over wild down to the lonely little church of Farley Chamberlayne, full of memorials of the St. John family. From the monument on Farley Down, turn which way you will, there is a magnificent panorama. Winchester is hidden, but all around is a maze of wood and valleyland, green, purple, and blue, criss-cross lines of hedge and patchwork of fields standing out when the sun catches them, fading to amethyst and grey vagueness when a cloud shadow passes. The long lines of hills rise, and break away, and merge into the dim distances. In the south-west every ridge almost is tree clad, for there lies the Forest. A haze hangs over Southampton, and the nebulous lines on the horizon may be cloud, but look like the outline of the Island Downs. Far into Wiltshire the scene stretches, and with the sunset light behind it, Salisbury's tall spire can be seen, and away on the uttermost rim of the sky the Downs of the north-west loom faintly blue. Farley Mount itself is visible from most parts of the county. It rises amid a barren wilderness; gorse, bramble, and yew dot the bleak spaces; nothing flourishes just here but the deadly belladonna in a ragged copse where West Wood

creeps to Ashley Down. It is curiously desolate, the home of shy wild things, and still a refuge for the stone curlew.

The monument, built on an ancient barrow, marks the grave and commemorates the exploits of Beware Chalk Pit, a horse owned by Mr. Paulet St. John, famous for having jumped into a chalk pit in 1733, and won the Hunter's Plate on Worthy Down a year later, "owner up" on each occasion! Mr. Barton Wallop when out with the Hursley in 1847 had a similar wonderful escape, but the drop beyond the fence which his horse "lepped" was only fifteen feet, ten less than Mr. St. John's horse accomplished. Did space but permit the telling, Winchester Races have many a story. There is more than one note concerning them in bygone centuries among the old documents in the Town Hall, such as how, in 1631, "a bowl with a cover for the race cupp waaing 2302.12 pennieweights at 5*s.* 8*d.* the oz." was purchased for £23. 13. 8, and "mending the waies near the race posts against the Lords coming to the Races that yere" cost 35*s.* Again and again bad weather interfered with the sport :—

> "Shift your race as you will, it shall never be dry
> The curse upon Venta is July in showers"

wrote Jane Austen in her lodgings at the corner of the entrance to Commoners, "with a bow window overlooking Dr. Gabell's garden."

> "When Winchester races first took their beginning
> 'Tis said that the people forgot their old Saint,
> That they never applied for the leave of St. Swithun,
> And that William of Wykeham's approval was faint."[1]

These merry lines were the last she was ever to pen, for only a few days later she was laid to rest in the nave of the great Cathedral.

[1] J. H. and E. Hubback, *Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers*, pp. 272–3.

CHAPTER V

BY WATER MEADOWS TO A BATTLEFIELD

"What sign of those that fought and died
At shift of sword and sword?
The barrow and the camp abide,
The sunlight and the sward."

KIPLING.—*The Five Nations.*

ITCHEN dancing over his chalky bed, lapping the meadow grasses and flirting with the flowers that bend to mirror their sweet faces in his streams, is the very spirit of inconsequent youth unwotting of the workaday world, with its thousand and one demands that would prison the diamond-clear waters betwixt the narrow, slimy walls of a mill sluice, and dam the banks that the errant currents may be confined to the ordered measure of a navigable canal. Yet here is Itchen, smiling in the Winchester meadows, knowing all these things, and as perverse and gaily insouciant as if he knew them *not*! Moreover Itchen is not young but very old, old past saying, for who may tell how soon after "Let there be light" flung wide the shutters of the Day, and the sunshine played on the round white shoulders of the virgin land uprisen from the blue sea waters, petulant Icenan broke southward through the transverse barrier of chalk to win a way home to the ocean? Men of science may pile their ages upon ages, dispute about River Drift implements, pen monographs on a tooth of *Elephas antiquus*, and measure the bones of *Bos primigenius*, Itchen's streams between low green hills, by rich water meadows, and through mimic lakes under the cool shade of well-timbered parks, flow serenely and eternally youthful.

Along this pleasant valley land :—

> " When that Aprille with his showeres soote
> The drought of March hath pierced to the roote
> . . . . . .
> Then longen folk to go on pilgrimages
> . . . . . .
> And specially from every shires end
> Of Engelond, to Canterbury they wend."

for here ran the Way, the Pilgrims' Way—name to conjure with! Memories and romances should cling to every inch of the ground. Ah, well! Since the cult of the Canterbury Saint inspired England's Father-poet with theme for his inimitable *Tales*—his pilgrims, however, journeyed from the Tabard of Southwark, not the Guest House of Winchester —the Way has been written about times and again, the groups of devotees, afoot or on horse, have been drawn as vividly as pen and pencil may secure ; and perhaps any whose fancy would fondly linger over romantic scene and setting for the pictured pilgrims had best be content to know only the Way of their imagination, for, however pleasant, romantic the modern high road is not, nor does it entirely follow the old Way. It is a good road, with hedges trimmer than the majority of Hampshire hedges, pretty villages, country houses standing back in parks, nothing very old, and yew trees are conspicuous by their absence. Still, this is but the surface of things, the road glanced at by the hurrying motorist, or unseen by the scorching cyclist with bent back and eyes only for the track immediately in front of his handle-bars. Delay a moment, and it will strike you there was an ancient air about that little church by the wayside where a stream trickles down to the valley meadows, a mile and a half to the north of Winchester, and that the names Abbot's Worthy, King's Worthy, Martyr Worthy, Itchen Abbas are suggestive of past histories. And some of the histories, and any number of yew trees of all sizes and ages, may be had for very little seeking.

It takes no master of architectural lore to recognise Saxon masons had a hand in the building of the grey little church of Headbourne Worthy. "A gem!" Bishop Wilberforce declared it, with narrow pilaster strips and the characteristic "long and short" stonework of the quoins. The most

noticeable feature in this small church of St. Swithun is the much-mutilated stone carving over the west door, which is admitted to be Saxon work even by those who place the very similar sculpture at Romsey in the Norman period. Originally this Rood was outside the church, for the western annexe was not built till the fifteenth century. How much damage was previously done by exposure to all weathers, how much is due to image-breaking enthusiasts of the next two centuries, it were useless to inquire, and in face of the ruin wrought through the energies of those who held all doxies but their

Headborne Worthy Church.

own heterodox it is matter for gratitude that aught of the three figures of this Crucifixion remain. The upper story of the Galilee was for long an anchorites' cell, though the only eremites that late years have known were a couple of white owls. The stone in the little churchyard below the east window marks the grave of Joseph Bingham, author of a profound work in ten volumes on the antiquities of the Christian Church, *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*. Bingham was a Yorkshire man and fellow of University College till a sermon he preached there in 1695 so angered the authorities he was forced to resign. His theories, however, were approved at

Winchester, when the great Dr. Radcliffe procured him the living of Headbourne Worthy, and in 1712 Bishop Trelawney made him also rector of Havant. He was one of the victims of the South Sea Bubble, and never survived to better his fortunes, for three years after its collapse he died at Havant when only in his fifty-fifth year. His daughter married the master of the Southampton grammar school, and their son was Dr. Mant, bishop successively of Killaloe, Down, and Dromore, a Hampshire man if an Irish bishop, for he was born at Southampton.

King's Worthy is not half a mile away, but its Perpendicular church, with an inlaid stone cross on the outer east wall, calls for no particular comment, and only the doorway remains of the Norman church the pilgrims knew at Martyr Worthy. The name, moreover, has no connection with the pilgrims, but is a corruption of Mortimer, for the Earls of March were lords of the manor after the Conquest. But much of the land of the Worthys was ecclesiastical property: the roads, the lanes, the farms from ruined Hyde up river all attest it, Monk's Walk, Nun's Walk, Abbot's Barton. Within memory there were carp in a pond at Black Farm by Itchen Abbas, "a stately, a good, and a very subtle fish," local tradition declares the Black Friars introduced. Peter de Rupibus brought the Dominicans to Winchester, but the old rhyme declares:—

> "Hops, reformation, turkeys, carps and beer
> Came into England all in one year."

Dame Juliana Berners, the sporting Prioress of Sopewell, mentions carps, "though but few." However this may be, if the monks had not that "choicely good" fish for Friday dinners, there is no question but they had many a fat trout from the river, for hereabouts are some of the best reaches on this famous trout stream, and there is no reason to suppose chalk streams had then less fat and richly coloured trouts than now. But Itchen as a trout stream is a subject that deserves a volume to itself, and moreover has had it, which is more than can be said for some equally deserving matters—luckily! But one of the noteworthy followers of the gentle art who have taken toll of Itchen's trout in these waters must be mentioned, for of the many avatars of Charles Kingsley it is as "a brother of the angle" that he is best remembered in this valley, and Itchen

Abbas treasures recollections of that versatile fisherman, angler first and foremost here or rumour maligns his memory, for it is whispered, "he has actually forgotten the services" when :—

> "The jealous trout, that low did lie
> Rose at a well-dissembled fly."

One room in the old Plough Inn—it had been rebuilt a twelve month or so when I went there—used to be called the Kingsley room, and in it, according to Itchen Abbas tales, *Water Babies* was penned ; this is not entirely correct, for we have it on his own authority that the first chapter was "written off without a check" in half an hour at Eversley in 1862.

Itchen Abbas has older memories than monks and pilgrims, however, for under what is now a tangled and overgrown rabbit warren on the south-east of the hill lies a fine square of tesselated pavement in almost as perfect condition as when first laid down in the Roman villa. Some years ago a man, when picking stones in the copse, dislodged part of a bank and came upon the ruin. The villa was opened up, but to prevent its destruction by a climate that, like tourists, is no respecter of ages and values, the owner, Sir Charles Shelley, decided to cover the remains over again.

Thus far we have followed the high road, but Easton Church which stands out above the stream against the woods on the other side of the valley draws attention to that village, a picturesque medley of tile and thatch, red brick and black and white half timber. There is a charming view from the white bridge that carries the road over one of the many water courses, but pleasanter far it is to wander herewards up the paths in the river meadows. Green shady lanes, fringed with water parsnip and meadow-sweet, lead down to them, and cross the streams on light, low bridges, or end in wet cart-ruts and muddy patches by a ford ; but there are footways in plenty, with planks over the wider ditches and no greater obstacle than stiles to encounter. I am tempted to follow friend Tristram's example and foist in a dissertation on stiles, but that might entail hurry later before our objective be reached, and it is not land to be hurried through, this vale of Itchen : its beauties grow upon those who linger by the placid waters, and watch the shadows break and gather over hillside, down and woodland ; or climb the low hills and note Itchen, tree bowered,

a blue blaze through green enamel as the streams twist in tortuous channels along the meadow lands under a midsummer sun, a soft green streak washed out with a grey wall of rain when Autumn weeps over the havoc her frosts and gales have wrought among the transient glories she showered on woods and copses, or "a dark line in the winter" amid the snow; but most entrancing when spring wakes Nature from her yearly sleep, when the willow catkins powder the air with their pale gold, and the crystal waters weave a mazy dance through the meadow grasses by a hundred creeks, channels and runlets, bubbling from the wells and springs that abound in the valleys graved through the chalk barriers of the Downs by the gathered waters of their inmost recesses. Here is a thatched cottage hidden away among the elms and alders by the river side, with a garden where flowers spread a feast for the bees; there, by Abbot's Worthy, a mill that looks like a materialisation of one of Herring's pictures, with groups of horses under the ash tree, and the grey, red and orange of lichen-stained brick and tile beyond.

Abbot's Worthy, once owned by the monks of Hyde, at the time of the Civil War belonged to the gallant defender of Colchester, of whom Clarendon wrote :—

> "He was a man, that whoever shall, after him, deserve best of the English nation, he can never think himself undervalued, when he shall hear, that his courage, virtue, and fidelity, is laid in the balance with, and compared to, that of Lord Capel."

A victim to the ill faith of Parliamentary leaders, Arthur Capel in prison, an old biographer tells us, "wrote some beautiful verses," and at his execution begged that his heart might be preserved in a silver box, a relic which was eventually given at the Restoration to Charles II. His lands were seized and much of the woodland destroyed when Parliament ordered two compensatory pensions to be paid to widows of defunct Roundheads from the proceeds.

A low ivy-covered wall of brick and flint separates Easton churchyard from the water meadows, and in July the heavy scent of the meadow-sweet there and the limes in the lane behind would be oppressive were it in air less liquid than this from the Downs. The church, restored some years ago, is Norman and Early English, with some elaborate mouldings and

a horse-shoe arch to the apsidal chancel. There is a mural tablet to Mrs. Barlow, a lady whose title to fame rests on her having been the wife and widow of one and mother-in-law of five bishops, two holding the Winchester See. In 1590 married bishops were sufficiently novel to be noteworthy!

If the mill by Abbot's Worthy was a picture by Herring the ford beyond Easton was one of Sidney Cooper's—cows red and cows black, cows speckled and cows white, curly-fringed sulky-faced Herefords, business-like shorthorns, red Devons and beautiful Alderneys, stood knee-deep in the rich pasture looped round by discursive Itchen, and beyond the thick trees bordering Avington Park, where ravens breed no longer, though a bittern is said to have nested there within the last quarter of a century. The old house, where Charles II. stayed to watch the building of his Winchester palace, was pulled down and rebuilt. When that all too Merry Monarch visited Avington with sweet Nell of Old Drury—riotous days and doings then—the property belonged to the George Brydges who married the notorious Lady Shrewsbury, of whom gossip Pepys tells more than one tale, notably of the duel between her first husband and the Duke of Buckingham, when the lady waited by the "close near Barne-Elmes," dressed as a page and holding her lover's horse!

Between Itchen Abbas, Avington and Alresford, the railway and roads run by the marshy riverlands, where water-plants flourish exceedingly, and pass by sundry low bridges over an intricate tangle of river channels. The brooks that unite in Old Alresford Pond and, as the River Alre, flow out south-westwards, here join with Itchen and the Candover stream. The sparkling waters broaden into wide shallows, one moment slipping crystal clear over smooth white chalkbeds, to ripple above waving patches of green weed the next; they race through swaying tufts of rushes, divide by a thicket of sedge and willow, and pass on in twisting inter-knitted channels, or bend round to a backwater where they glide so lazily scarce a tremor breaks the reflection of overhanging trees, save when a falling leaf or passing insect make mimic ruffle. One favourite corner of mine on a sunny day is near the bridge by a picturesque old mill between Ovington and Itchen Stoke, a most excellent spot to listen to the river music, lip-lip-lip *pianissimo diminuendo*, of the streamlets that wander contrarily through the low meadows, and the persistent whur-whirr-

whirurn of the wheel. Everywhere birds, moorhens and coots, slipping in and out between the rushes, haunt of many another water-fowl, warblers in the reeds and willow-brakes, swallows flitting in fantastic circles, swift as the dragon flies whisk their bravery of metallic colouring over the sedges, and pigeons in the shady trees with their never-ending amorous coo. Through the mill comes Itchen placidly enough, no turmoil, no ferment, hardly an extra ripple on his surface, for it is all in the day's work, and already these gathered waters of three valleys have been busy workers, and served mills as far apart as Abbotstone, Bishop's Sutton and Cheriton. Meadow-sweet, like creamy foam wreaths flung among the grasses, forget-me-not, and willow-herb make gay patches by the duller mauve of the handsome hemp agrimony; the big coarse leaves of the comfrey, sparsely hung with white and purple bells, grow down to the sedge beds, where the reed-mace lifts its sceptre of gold-dusted bronze above a host of minor beauties; mimulus riots by the clear water's edge in gorgeous bravery dimming all golds, outrivalling the cornflag itself, and making the yellow water-lily gross by comparison. Below lies a reach that be you a fishing enthusiast or a mere dreamer and lover of the beautiful, once known is like to be hereafter remembered in many a waking vision, when in happy fancy one roams unfettered through the choicest spots with one's most dear companions, and in thought's mirage epics are penned, master-pieces painted, and trout of most impossible poundage prove the magic in our own particular fly that cannot fail to—

"Bewitch poor fishes' wand'ring eyes."

Those who have fished Itchen's clear waters are fain to confess the trouts therein are none so easily bewitched, whatever John Donne may have thought of trout in general! By the way, one reads of the trout being "duped"—stupid beast!—by the angler's fly. Why duped? May not that subtle fish be allowed a grain of curiosity—do we humans never swallow our artificial flies?

Another shaded lane leads up the hill to the south, past Ovington Church and Park to the direct road from Winchester to Alresford. Once up the hill the change of scene and sound is utter, from the rich watermeads to down-land, the fragile rock-rose instead of luscious mimulus, and close upland herbage

instead of succulent grasses; but there is music still, for the wind sings through every beech coppice and the tremulous notes of the lark rise and fall overhead. The road runs south-west to the corner of what little remains to bear the historic name of Hampage Wood. Everyone knows its story, the grudging King and the, it must be confessed, wily Bishop. As much wood as he could gather in a night might be taken to roof his cathedral. Weaker men than Walkelyn would have lost all through pleading for more. The resource that could gather an army of woodmen to clear every tree worth the taking was a part of the genius that planned the work standing to this day commemorated in Winchester Cathedral. If you have never done so yet, fail not next time a spare hour offers in that city to climb up to the space betwixt vaulting and roof and note those timbers, upwards of nine centuries old, that once grew here, and think a moment of the old Bishop who knew how to seize however slight an opportunity and wrench therefrom success, for such knowledge is a gift the gods do not lavish on mankind, else were we all kings and captains!

South-east of Ovington Park lies another county seat, the home of the Tichbornes. The house is modern, but the history of Tichborne dates to Saxon times, and the unfortunate Chidiock Tichborne—he paid with his head for conspiring on behalf of ill-fated Mary of Scotland—claimed that his ancestors were here two centuries before the Conquest. Even disallowing his claim, they are one of the oldest families in the county. The *cause célèbre* connected with the baronetcy is too notorious to require recapitulation, but whatever the law may have eventually decided there be very many Hampshire folk who to this day stoutly maintain that the Claimant was not Arthur Orton but the missing Sir Roger Tichborne; a dispute which, if settled by law theoretically, would seem as far from solution as the wrangle over the tomb of Rufus! There is some early work in the church on the green slope to the west of the village, and a Norman chancel; but the old manor house, with its secret passages, hollow walls, and hidden chambers, some of it dating to Norman times, was partly pulled down a century ago, and during the alterations the remainder collapsed. This was said by the superstitious to be due to the fact that the famous Dole a few years previously had been commuted into a sum of money privately distributed to the parochial poor. The story

of the Dole is almost as well known as that of the great trial—how the saintly Lady Mabella, credited with miracles in her life time, accomplished one from her deathbed. Full of years and infirmities she petitioned her husband to give her land to endow an annual gift of bread to all comers, and he promised whatever ground she could get round might be hers to dispose of. The lady lay a-dying at the time, but, like Meleager, the frail thread of her life might not snap till a certain miraculous brand should be burnt, so with confidence great as her faith the old dame started on her parlous task. How she fáred, how the *Crawls* thenceforward furnished the thousand and odd loaves, and how the Dole attracted such crowds of idlers and vagabonds as to become a public nuisance, needs no telling, nor the dying lady's curse—the billet meanwhile in the burning—on the house of Tichborne should the Dole be interfered with. Many another tale might be told of this old family, the recusant Benjamin, knighted by Queen Bess at Basing, royal visits to the old manor, and troubles through intolerant religious legislation, but space permits not, for we have yet the upper valley of Itchen to examine before returning to Cheriton and the fight of 1644.

The waters of the three streams Candover, Alre and Itchen meet, as has been said, by Ovington; to this point they flow from valleys running roughly north, east and south respectively. Itchen's most important permanent springs are to be found just off the lane that leads towards Kilmeston, but another stream that rises near Bramdean joins by Hinton Marsh, and the valley bends eastwards, and runs to the north of the Downs parting the head waters of Itchen from the Meon river, up to the high lands beyond Privett that on their eastern slopes are drained by the many streamlets of the Rother. The main road from Winchester to Petersfield follows the valley, into which it drops from Cheesefoot Head, sweeping round Gander Down, and from Hinton Marsh for the next seven and a half miles has a gradual rise of only two hundred feet, though the hills on either side have steepish gradients. The road is a most charming one: the Downs rise on either side, woodland and copse break the curves of their outlines, and on an autumn afternoon the colours in the woods and the beautiful old Hampshire hedges are superb—buckthorn leaves, from rich reds to dull purples, the yellowing ash, elder trees with heavy store of fruit and

with a touch here and there of pink among the fading leaves; in the copses the rich russets of oak, the bronze-gold and olive of the beeches; while the green of the aftermath shows through the soft brown of sunburnt grasses like folds of shot velvet on the hillsides between the red-brown of the fallow. A mile or so to the west of the cross-roads Brookwood Park stands in its grounds well away from the road which, with its wide verges and trees spreading down from the wooded hills, is more like a drive through a park than a public highway. On the grass to the north of the road a curious collection of grey whether sandstones catches the eye. These, I had heard in another village, were "older than Stonehenge," and "can't be counted, they say, but," added my informant shrewdly, "that's nonsense, for the're twenty-one." Perhaps the legend is true, for I made the number twenty-three! On the opposite side of the road a pile of stones marks the grave of a favourite hunter of Colonel George Greenwood. The story told in Bramdean village is that the old soldier wheeled all the stones there in a barrow himself after having been warned by a doctor that he had not long to live, but might prolong his days a trifle by exercise in the open air, whereon he determined to make active use of what life he might have, and lived to enjoy it for many a year after the pessimistic doctor had foretold its end. The family were all good sportsmen, hence the punning reference in an old song of the Hambledon Hunt Club—

> "As the pride of our country by all 'tis confest,
> That our *Greenwoods* in winter appear at their best;
> Either Colonel or Captain, whatever they ride,
> Will get over a church and the steeple beside."

In *Rains and Rivers* Colonel Greenwood left a valuable addition to the county literature. He lies under another grey whether stone by the old church of Hinton Ampner. Brookwood was the home also of the novelist, Charlotte Smith, a now forgotten writer, however popular she may have been when Miss Mitford read and appreciated her books. The lady had the somewhat questionable taste in one of them to ridicule her husband's hobby, experimental scientific farming. The neighbouring house of Woodcote furnished material for her *Old Manor House*. In 1823 the remains of a large Roman villa were discovered in the grounds above Woodcote, with the very fine tesselated pavements now in Winchester Museum.

Three other villages lie adjacent to our battlefield—Hinton Ampner, Kilmeston and Beaworth, or Beauworth. From the hill above Hinton one gets a magnificent view towards the Meon valley, or across to Gander Down and over Cheriton's fatal field. The little church of All Saints is very old, with Saxon as well as Norman work in its much-patched fabric.

The old Hinton House was pulled down at the end of the eighteenth century, some forty or fifty years after it had passed from the Stewkeleys, whose monuments are many in the church. In the interim the house got a very undesirable reputation as a haunted house. Mysterious apparitions in drab-hued garments wandered promiscuously around; a woman was seen to glide and vanish through the rooms in fashion more intangible than flesh and blood should lawfully attain to. The noises, the groans and a variety of such-like alarming proceedings drove everyone from the house. Then a large reward was offered for explanation of the mystery, but none was forthcoming, till finally the house was pulled down, when it was discovered that a network of secret passages, doors and stairways, long forgotten and disused, existed in the stout old walls. It was suggested that the servants had had a hand in the proceedings, and that the ghostly visitants, if grappled with, would have been found after all of quite solid flesh and blood. Certainly the accounts of the alarums and excursions read familiarly to all who remember their *Woodstock*; but the stories are contradictory. According to one version an intrepid ghost-hunter, Capt. Jervis,—the victor of St. Vincent, no less!—when his sister, Mrs. Ricketts, was living in the house, failed to solve the puzzle, but by another he is credited with having caught a servant indulging in these terrifying pranks. The story as told by "Thomas Ingoldsby," is given in the *Life of the Rev. R. H. Barham* his son published: he mentions another account which places the scene at Marwell Hall, gives no explanation of the mystery, and considers it was Lord St. Vincent's father, and not the great sailor, who went a-hunting ghosts.

Beauworth is noteworthy for an extraordinary treasure-trove found near the old litten. The present church is modern, for as early as the sixteenth century the ancient chapelry was suffered to fall into decay: the stones were carted off for building purposes elsewhere, leaving no trace of its existence

but the name "old litten field." Sixty-four years ago a small boy was playing with three friends, and in picking up a strayed marble from a cart-ruck caught sight of some protruding metal, which proved to be a leaden box full of "old buttons," so the village decision ran. Then ensued a scramble for possession, till the parents of one of the original finders went off to Alresford to complain to the owner of the land, Mr. Dunn, of the unfair proceedings. Efforts were at once made to secure the trove, and some 6,000 of the coins were recovered. The hoard, all unused, is said to have been part of a coinage struck to commemorate peace, hence the *Pax subditis* thereon, and was probably buried in the Red King's reign.

Cheriton is a pretty and quiet enough village through which young Itchen, already, within a mile of his source, not content with one channel, divides and twists his way under footbridge and round garden wall. The church, with its brick and flint tower and very trim ivy, stands on a wind-swept knoll, a mound that antiquaries say must be of Celtic origin. The church is not the only one in Hampshire built on an older sacred site, "the gods' mounds," by which it seems the early Christians had more respect for the dead and gone, the holy ground of their pagan predecessors, even the old deities, than the lack-reverence peoples of later, not to say present, generations. For though it may be argued loftily that we know better now than our superstitious forbears, and scornfully that we are no longer in the Dark Ages, yet it is not impossible that the ultimate descendants of the last New Zealander may regard us as no further, perchance even less far, removed from the builders and worshippers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than were the Saxon masons from the mound-builders of pre-Roman days; but they raised churches where their forefathers prayed to unknown gods, we crowd to a pyrotechnic display where our ancestors paid devotions to the God we likewise worship.[1] The church has been restored and altered since a disastrous fire in the eighteenth century, but the old lancet windows of the chancel remain.

There is nothing to mark the village or the vale as different from a dozen others hereabouts, and the very memory of its

[1] At Netley Abbey.

day of storm and stress has passed. Nothing to note, according to a villager's account, except a bad turning just beyond there, at North End on the road to Tichborne and Alresford, and of that the notice-boards give warning sufficient. But battlefield? "Never 'eard tell o' none." That was all the assistance I had locally, though at Bramdean they had talked of the farm half a mile from the village where bread was baked for the Puritan troopers, and Ovington has a legend that Slaughter Close got its name when beasts were killed there to supply the Cavalier commissariat. The battlefield lies between the village and Cheriton Wood, and may be gained by more than one lane running from the high roads, or by the old lane from Cheriton to Bishop's Sutton that turns off the road by North End and leads past the farm aforementioned. Lonely enough it looks by its fir trees, thatched, with timber showing in its brick walls. On a summer day nothing could be more entirely peaceful than this shallow vale. The land slopes gently to the baby river from the ridge that divides its upper waters from Alre, and the silvery green of oats, or brighter line of young wheat, is broken by bronzed hay meadows, also cut across and again by thick irregular hedges. Once the old hollow way down from Sutton Scrubs ran red, they say, with blood; now only the scarlet petals of languid poppies suggest the hundreds "put to sleep by swords," as the fine old Saxons would have phrased it. No note more shrill than the cricket's; no call more urgent than a lamb bleating by an old farmstead; no sign of man but his handiwork in the fields and a thread of wreathing smoke from a hidden chimney, none whatever of his passions, except—well, yes—barbed wire! A lane runs from the ridge the Puritans held, where the peewit nests in the rough grass, by the south-west of Cheriton Wood and up to the old trackway we have already noted. In a grassy hollow the glint of metal caught my eye. Only a rubbish heap, but the broken tins and a pile of bleaching sheepbones were graphic reminder of what, tradition says, lies under the knolls and mounds in "Lamberry Field" and Cheriton Wood.

It was early in the spring following the severe winter of 1643–4 that Lords Forth and Hopton, with Kent and Sussex for their objective, challenged the enemy under Sir William Waller to give battle. The King's plan of campaign the pre-

vious year had been to concentrate his forces on rebel London, but while the Parliament's troops held Plymouth, Gloucester and Hull he could not withdraw his three armies from west and north; hence delay, and in March, 1644, the campaign in the south-eastern counties was yet for the doing. And delay did not mend matters for the King. At the outbreak of hostilities the Royalist army man for man had been of a quality greatly better than the rebel leaders could muster; but as the struggle proceeded the Cavaliers gained in little or nothing, rather the reverse, for their gaps were filled with untrained men who as often as not were but lukewarm adherents, or even pressed into service. On the other hand the Roundheads made steadily for improvement. It needed but one battle to show Cromwell that to match the dash and fire of the Cavalier gentleman the only available material must be the solid determination bred of religious fanaticism knit with a stern discipline. Such an army is not made in a day, or a fortnight—no army is, for that matter—but by the spring of 1644 the Parliament troops were more of the pattern of the New Model army that a year later was to prove irresistible than the "old decayed serving men and tapsters" who lost the day at Edgehill in 1642. Spiritual discipline combined with military discipline was to weld an indomitable force against which the bravery of more fine-drawn human passions could but fret itself to sorry tatters. And something of this religious zeal and improved discipline made for success at Cheriton Fight. Not that it was yet perfect. Waller's London and Kentish regiments, had they been ordered to fight with a view to a long campaign in the west, would have been perilously near mutiny; as it was the decision to give battle marched with their own inclinations when it was discovered that Hopton held the London road and to win their way homewards most promptly they must fight, and fight opponents for whom recent experiences and religious training were engendering a confident scorn. With many in the Royal army it was otherwise: victory for them meant a march away from their homes, and moreover they were not only mostly pressed men, but the infantry in the main were yet raw youths, utterly lacking experience or training; the greater their credit therefore that the disasters of the battle were due almost entirely to the bad behaviour of the cavalry. Nor must it be forgotten that

Hopton's men were at best ill-armed, and the enemy were "as they were always, much better armed, no man wanting any weapon offensive or defensive that was proper for him"; especially Haselrig's "Lobsters were so formidable that the King's naked and ill-armed troops (amongst which few were better armed than with swords) could not bear their impression." Thus commented Clarendon. In numbers so far as can be gathered from the very contradictory accounts, both armies were almost equal—some 10,000 men.

Waller had more than one defeat at the hands of his erstwhile friend Hopton to avenge, for in the previous July he had been beaten first near Bath and again near Devizes. Against that he now could set the retaking of Arundel Castle and a successful fight at Alton, whereof more presently, so though Parliament advised caution there was no lack of willingness on his part to join issue, and on March 21st the Parliamentary army, having commandeered all available transport on the Sussex border, was marching towards Alresford, with Tichborne Down for rendezvous. Meanwhile Hopton was not idle: within a mile of Winchester he threw up big earthworks—it is suggested that these were the *Oliver's* Battery of to-day—and further entrenchments on Gander Down to protect the city against an advance from the east; finally he secured the Itchen valley route by outworks on Tichborne Down, an old encampment, for Lord de Clifford and an army of "lances and archers" lay there in 1417. When, therefore, Sir William Balfour attempted to reach Alresford with the Parliamentary horse, Hopton himself occupied the town with his cavalry before the enemy could win their way thither. Previous to this there had been skirmishing. The enemy did not gain West Meon without some desultory fighting with Cavalier outposts, and further skirmishing occurred the next day when the main body with Waller were advancing from Petersfield. Hopton followed up his successful move on Alresford by a reconnaissance in force. He counted on surprising the enemy and taking them at a disadvantage, for Parliament had decreed it a day of fasting and prayer; but Waller had shrewdly argued a fast in Surrey when his troops were inactive would be more to the point than when he might be at close quarters with his opponents; they were therefore quite ready to fight and "under arms instead of at prayers," the *Account by an Eye-Witness*

affirms.[1] Waller therefore, on coming up with his main body, pushed on down the valley. Hopton had foiled his plans at the outset by seizing Alresford, he did so again by directing Colonel George Lisle to take up a position on the ridge of high land that runs from West Tisted by Bramdean Common to Cheriton Wood, and commands both the Farnham and Petersfield roads, which Waller, reputed to have as good an eye for ground as any man of his day, had also determined to hold. Lisle drove the enemy back and bivouacked on the ridge. Waller's army lay within touch of the Royalist outposts by Lamborough field. This was on Wednesday, March 27th. But Lisle was evidently on the north-western slope of the spur, for Thursday showed the enemy occupying higher ground than the Royalists. That day saw more fighting on and about the ridge without advantage to either party.

But the Parliamentarian generals were by no means content with their position. The Royalists if defeated could, as the event proved, retire on Winchester and Basing House, but there could be "nae . . . speering ahint" for the enemy, for Hopton if victorious cut them from their base—Farnham. So far the balance of success lay with the Royalist General. It is also to be remembered that Parliament had enjoined caution. In fine, whatever the rank and file thought, the responsible officers considered the situation too dubious. Retreat was decided on. This accorded ill with the temper of the men, and Colonel Birch openly ignored Waller's order; the withdrawal commenced but slowly, and in the end fortune played into the hands of those who would force an issue, and led Waller to rescind his orders, for when day broke the valley was wrapt in a thick mist, and under this cover the troops gained the high ground by Cheriton Wood. Both armies occupied strong defensive positions; the left flank of the Royalists and the right flank of the enemy lying on the rough wooded high land, their fronts protected by the natural slope of the ground down to the open common that spread in a hollow between them like an irregular tip-tilted saucer.

[1] It has been remarked that this *Eye-Witness* was the first war-correspondent on record; he was "imployed in the service of the City and State" to report the doings of the London Brigade, and his *Account* was "published by authority." So the first war-correspondence, like many a "History limped along on official crutches"!

With this exception the ground was either rough heath and wood, as on the ridge, or, as nowadays, enclosed fields with thick hedgerows. The old hollow way led down from Hopton's centre to the common. Clearly then through Cheriton Wood lay the key to the situation. At daybreak the London brigade held the south-west corner, but Hopton, who throughout proved himself a good general, was prepared for this: the highest ground lies to the north-east of the wood, and there he posted his artillery; so, though Appleyard's infantry failed to dislodge the enemy, the London men, their Eye-Witness has recorded, could not advance when the 5-lb. shot of the drakes tore through the undergrowth, and though reinforcements were sent they drew back before an hour had passed since the first shot waked the morning echoes. "Ah, woe is me, all is lost, we are all undone!" cried Hazelrig. Hopton promptly ordered his cavalry to charge on the retreating enemy. But the ground was not favourable, "they could not march in any order," says Eye-Witness, and Forth, who had been laid up at Alresford with an attack of gout but had now joined Hopton, refused to allow his more eager junior to push his cavalry on, preferring to force the onus of attack on the enemy, who could only adopt offensive tactics at a disadvantage. "The day," wrote the London correspondent, "was doubtful if not desperate."

Alack! that the fairest schemes of strategists, like other men's, "gang aft a-gley." Age and experience were content to wait; not so hot-headed youth. Despite the General's orders a wild Cavalier gallant, Sir Harry Bard, with a handful of horsemen, broke away and dashed down to the open common. Better had it been for Forth to leave his rash subordinate to the consequences of his own folly and disobedience. Waller had marked the narrow lane that debouched on the valley, and his horse were in readiness on the open ground in advance of his left flank to charge the Cavaliers, while his infantry lined the hedgerows to pour their volleys in on the advancing Royalists. Bard was doomed. Yet Forth, after some delay, sent Stawell to support the mad charge. The Cavaliers fought desperately, but the enemy's artillery commanded the valley, and their horse could charge unhindered on every detachment that struggled down the hollow way. For three hours the battle waged, but Forth, drawn to assume the tactics he had hoped to enforce on the enemy, could do little to stay eventual

disaster. Hazelrig and his invincible "Lobsters" charged in between the Royalist cavalry and their infantry, stubbornly holding the hedges on the northern slopes. Thereafter confusion.

Forth drew off his men and guns, "whereof he lost none," says Clarendon. The cavalry in the rear, under Hopton, fought doggedly to the last to cover the retreating foot, and even killed their horses to block the narrow lanes. Passing Alresford they set that Puritan town ablaze, and so, as the night closed down, pushed on through the darkness to Winchester and Basing House. Thus ended a battle that, according to the great historian of the Rebellion, "broke all the measures and altered the whole scheme of the King's counsels"; nor ever again did Fortune so smile on the Royal cause. England lost a King and got in exchange a Protector, and let it be said and done with, a man, with all his faults—and they were very many—who was a strong man, a statesman, and one of the world's great captains, who knew, not only how to handle, but how to train troops, and has left many a military lesson, and none his country need more to remember than that without discipline men under the stress of battle are no better than a mob, and discipline, which is not engendered by a few weeks' acquaintance with the drill book or proficiency on the rifle ranges, discipline alone can transform a mob into an army of soldiers.

CHAPTER VI.

CENTRAL HANTS.

"Green pasturage and the grace of standing corn
And meadow and marsh with springs and unblown leaves,
Flocks and swift herds and all that bite sweet grass."
SWINBURNE, *Atalanta in Calydon.*

THE traveller whose ideas of Hampshire are gathered from the fleeting vistas he may snatch between cuttings and tunnels as the train speeds up from Southampton to London would, for the most part, come to very erroneous conclusions as regards our county. Especially would this be the case in that portion which is here gathered, it may be somewhat arbitrarily, under the heading—Central Hants. A cursory view gives it as a country of low, rolling downs, big woods and wide arable lands. To take it in detail would be to tell of lane and coppice, hill and dell, with more rarely than elsewhere marish and streamlet. There are large estates where sheltering avenues of beech, or dark lines of fir, shut the bare outline of grassed hill-side and bleak acres of stubble, or chalky fallow from view, where the scanty springs are coaxed into artificial lakes, and villages cluster by manor house and church. Sometimes where the road crosses a higher sweep of downland, a view of blue hills on the distant horizon is caught beyond the undulating lines of wood and cornfield, but for the most part its beauties are those of a purely agricultural countryside.

We left Alresford burning behind the flying troops after Cheriton Fight. Not a very serious conflagration on that occasion, but fire wrought havoc many a time in this market town, which is one reason why, with history and legends going back to pre-Saxon days—the remains of a Roman villa were found

at Woodshot near Bighton—it has nothing older than the pond and causeway made by Bishop de Lucy seven hundred years ago to secure a navigable channel from Alresford to the sea. The canal can be traced, the lake, though lesser in area, and its huge dam remain; perhaps their day may come again when only light traffic goes by motor on the highroads, and heavy, slow-going baggage is relegated to barges and steamers on the network of neglected waterways over our island.

Though in the fourteenth century the rush of Alre's waters as they churned through the races was drowned in the clatter from many a busy fulling or corn mill, Alresford's prosperity was not of long continuance. In those days only Winchester and Portsmouth were richer towns. But with the evil times of the French wars Winchester trade failed daily, and Alresford lost her market; fire and pestilence silenced the carding looms, destroyed the town, and devastated the countryside; so the next century saw the town too poor to pay quit-rent when Waynflete was, *ex officio*, lord of the manor. Nor were the losses ever made good; the sea was too distant, and Basingstoke proved the better mart for agricultural produce. Alresford Church has seen as many vicissitudes and rebuildings as the town. Peter Heylin, the historian, was rector when the Parliamentary troops occupied Alresford and put out the blaze the Cavaliers started. As a follower of Laud, whose life he wrote, Heylin was entirely obnoxious to the predominant party. They sacked his house and looted his library, but Peter had evaded them and joined the King at Oxford. Many were his trials and adventures before he ejected his successor and retook possession of Alresford Rectory two years after the Restoration. On some of the tombstones in the churchyard foreign names tell of the days when French prisoners were quartered here, as in many another Hampshire town.

Halfway down Broad Street a tablet on the plastered wall of a little house on the western side announces that Mary Russell Mitford was born there in December 1787. A weather-beaten, smoke-stained chimney-stack towers above the tiles of the sloping roof. Very spic and span, "genteel" in fact, look the curtained windows, and the door under its heavy lintel opening on to the paved causeway atop the wide path that slopes to the road, bordered by an avenue of young limes and sycamores, Sheltering one day under the leaky blind of a shop opposite

during a heavy summer shower, I remember wondering if Miss Mary was behind that muslin curtain would she draw the yellow blinds in silent protest against the impertinent intruder with pen and sketch-book who stared across at her modest window, or would she invite me in and give me a cup of tea with Lizzy while we discussed the latest doings in "feverish London"? Miss Austen would have drawn the curtain, Miss Mitford methinks rather have inclined for the gossip, especially had one feigned an admiration for her poems and plays. Perchance I misjudge the lady who wrote, "Alresford is, or will be, celebrated in history for two things; the first—to speak modestly—is my birth; the second is cricket." When the gentle sex adds self-confidence to a pen-pushing capacity even the Bard of Avon must tremble for his laurels!

But Miss Mitford's life was not an easy one. Dr. Mitford after he had dissipated his younger-son's portion had married an Alresford heiress, elderly in eighteenth-century opinion—that is the one point on which we are more gallant nowadays; ladies are not elderly till verging on the sixtieth milestone of life; heiresses never; "well—hardly ever"! By all accounts the Doctor was a gambler and a spendthrift, but both wife and daughter were devoted to the man so greatly dowered with the beauty and graces in which they were singularly lacking. Mrs. Mitford's fortune soon went the way of his own money, and before Miss Mary had attained the ripe age of seven summers the Alresford house was perforce given up, books and furniture sold, and instead of the old home with its flowery gardens, cheap London lodgings were her fate, till a lucky lottery ticket brought a third fortune for George Mitford to squander. Had it been otherwise Alresford might have been *Our Village*, but, again, with no pressing incentive to make money by her pen Miss Mitford would, in all probability, have left us no *Country Sketches*, but more poems and plays that most of us do not even know by name, whereas Berkshire would be the poorer if in her riper days she had not given us the minute word paintings of her rural home.

Alresford, that is to say New Alresford, once New Market, the daughter town of the old village half a mile to the north, is built on rising ground. The highway runs through it, and, at right angles in front of the church, meets the wide road that leads to the older part of the little town. Broad Street is more

like an elongated square than a village street, and halfway down the hill it ends abruptly with a turn to right and left. The latter way dips steeply and gives as charming a peep into bygone times as you could wish for. No two houses are alike in aught but picturesque quaintness; tiled fronts, brick and timber, dormer and gable, slate and creeper-covered brick, set at all angles, with irregular steps and bayed windows above the foot-path, where tufts of grass push up presumptuously between the cobbles, and the narrow flagged pathway is as broken and irregular as the line of the roofs. Trees rise in the valley below, half hiding red brick chimney-stacks, and beyond are low hills.

Alresford.

The rough and stony street leads to a cinder path alongside cress beds and a mill, for, hidden away behind the Globe Inn by the turn where Broad Street forks to the right, the Alre, prisoned between mossy brick walls, slips away swiftly under the bridge, but so quietly that the ordinary pedestrian, unable to glimpse over the parapet without craning his neck, might pass a many times and never notice the baby river. Beyond this bridge the road runs over the old causeway by the weir, under a fine row of elms that border Alresford Pond. Seen from the path by the mill none would suppose that behind the belt of trees, where the copper beech makes exquisite patches of purple among the leafy elms reflected in their fulness of colouring in

the pools between the cress beds below, lies a large sheet of water. Till recently the path by its reed-grown marge was a favourite walk of the villagers, but it has been fenced in and now can only be peeped at over the palings.

Of the Palace of the Winchester Bishops that once stood in the meadows by the church at Bishop's Sutton only the legendary site of the Kennel can now be traced, though Duthy, writing in 1839, mentions that many could remember "considerable vestiges of a strong and extensive building" that had disappeared even then. The church, however, has much old work remaining, notably two very early Norman windows and the arch of the south door, this last probably built in the twelfth century.

The Alre trickles through the lush grass of the meadows on the north of the high road, and a lane leads over Tichborne Down, and there in eighteenth-century days Alresford youth did battle in the cricket field on the grassy spaces where a hundred years before the Royalist army lay. Taylor of Ropley and Alresford was a well-known cricketer in his time, and a member of the original Hambledon Club. So also were Mr. H. Bonham and John Freemantle, both Alresford men, and in more recent days John Dunn. "Mr. Dunn's match," Gentlemen v. Players, was one of the events of the year six decades ago. "Cricket is to Alresford what beer is to Doncaster, or cakes to Shrewsbury. Hampshire is the Greece of cricketers, and Alresford the Athens," wrote Miss Mitford. Had she writ Hambledon the phrase might pass. Perhaps the alliteration tempted, but it may have been penned in genuine confidence, for the lady's vicarious interest in sport greatly exceeded her practical knowledge thereof.

Summer was not the only season when sporting events loomed large in Alresford calendars. The first Hunt in Hampshire according to "Æsop" dates from Mr. Evelyn's pack at Harmsworth—the H is now dropped—in 1745; another authority mentions fox-hounds kept in the county by Lord Arundell in the previous century, thus bringing Hampshire into competition with her neighbours Dorset and Wilts. for the right of precedence, not forgetting the claims of Essex and Yorkshire to that honour. Mr. Evelyn's hounds became, under Mr. Thomas Ridge of Kilmeston Manor, the Kilmeston Hunt, and eventually the Hampshire Hunt. They met frequently at the Swan Inn at

Alresford and there the H. H., as early as 1817, gave a supper and ball which, the *Hampshire Chronicle* recorded, was opened by Lord Rodney and Lady Isabella Douglas, the room being "appropriately chalked, decorated, and illuminated." Some of the guests at the H. H. ball three years later indulged in a new dance that evoked the scathing remark: "A waltzing match is, we humbly suggest, a more indecent exhibition than a boxing match." Miss Mitford could not imagine "what the defenders of this most *un-English* dance can find to say for it." What would the *Blackwood* contributor and the talented but ungraceful lady have thought of Kitchen Lancers and the eccentricities of Barn Dance or Cake Walk in modern ball rooms! The waltz, if it did once arouse more holy horror than the latest innovation nowadays would ever do, has attained a lasting popularity no successive novelty can ever rival, and a panegyric on its subtle delights would have been more in accord with the prescience of Kit North's gifted band than scandalised comment.

Mention of Lord Rodney is reminder that his grandfather, the great naval hero Admiral Lord Rodney, lived at Alresford. When Hawke was out-matching Conflans Rodney was destroying the nascent fleet at Havre that was to have conveyed a French army of invasion to English shores, and this, with his services in the West Indies during the next four years, won him a baronetcy. Success, however, was not yet to come in full measure. Sir George Brydges Rodney entered Parliament, and thereby incurred expenses which before the end of the decade so hopelessly involved his financial affairs that he was obliged to seek a refuge from monetary embarrassments in the very land whose navy had suffered so oft and greatly at his hands. But France appreciated the great sailor more truly than his own country, and a command in her fleet was offered him by the Marechal de Biron. Rodney's refusal must be given in his own words:—

"Pecuniary difficulties, it is true, have driven me from my country, but no temptation can draw me from her service. Had this offer, my lord duke, been voluntary on your part, I should have considered it as an insult. It is well that it proceeds from a source that can do no wrong."

De Biron, it is said, gave practical proof of his admiration and true friendship by assisting his one-time enemy to

settle with his creditors and return to England when Lord Sandwich offered him a command in 1779. The following January he defeated Don Juan Langara's Spanish squadron off Cape St. Vincent. Battle was not joined till 4 p.m. according to Rodney's despatch. "The action and pursuit continued, with a constant fire, till two o'clock in the morning," though "the weather, during the night, was at times very tempestuous," otherwise, the Admiral declared, "not one of their squadron had escaped." But "Great Britain was again mistress of the Straits," and Gibraltar relieved. To refer to Rodney's subsequent triumphs, how French, Spaniards, and Dutch alike were worsted is, we all know, to recall a long page of glory in the history of our navy. Victory in European waters was followed by further successes in the West Indies, notably the action of April 12, 1782, when Rodney originated the manœuvre of breaking the enemy's line and taking advantage of the resultant confusion to destroy it in detail.

The manor house of Old Alresford and the properties held by the Rodneys were previously in the possession of the Nortons, a Hampshire family with lands at Southwick and East Tisted. In Civil War days when "old Colonel Norton," the father of "Idle Dick" owned the Alresford estates, the Tisted Nortons of Rotherfield were of the opposite party, and, later, in the *Calendar of the Committee for Compounding*, is record that "Sir Richard and John Norton on their father's death compound for his and their own delinquency." Old Alresford Church is an uninteresting specimen of eighteenth-century architectural deficiencies. The small village is scattered in an irregular triangle by Old Alresford House and a narrow strip of common, at the head of which a streamlet bubbles up through the long grasses and purls across and down the meadows to swell Itchen's young flood. The road runs northwards to Abbotstone Wood and Godsfield, once a hospital of the Knights Templars. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* A more forlorn and melancholy ruin I know not in all Hampshire than these few grey walls. The windows are roughly bricked or boarded up, so that only spiders on the worm-eaten beams under the tiled roof, or a beetle burrowing through the dust, may know the dreary desolation in this survival of the building which was the principal house owned by the Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in

Hampshire for some two centuries after Henry de Blois founded this Preceptory. By 1338 the "messuage with buildings" was "in poor repair," and eleven years later when the Black Death broke out, the headquarters were removed to the branch house at North Baddesley. If specialists may find it of interest, the place will not tempt many to linger; better, if you must meditate on the vanity of human greatness, to pass on and indulge in reverie where the pink spindles of the willow-herb push out from the rough undergrowth of Abbotstone Wood, for the sunshine, the gay squirrels, and the birds will be a healthy antidote, and prevent any unduly morbid thoughts. If it be a wet, grey day and you are bent on sad imaginings, you may have your fill of that painful pleasure amid the spiky-leaved junipers on the bleak hills beyond, or among the wilderness of those contorted bushes that grow about the mounds marked on the ordnance survey "Oliver's Battery." But why Oliver's I know not, except that when Parliament sequestered the lands of the great Loyalist of Basing "Abberston and Itchell" were bestowed on Cromwell as reward for his capture of the Royalist stronghold. Afterwards the Dukes of Bolton owned the manor, and the first Duke built a house, of which only the bowling green remains. The old earthworks of the "Battery" are hidden under thickets, "hassocks," of ash or hazel, and in the autumn the holly, with its berries crimsoning as the green fruit-clusters of the privet alongside darken to dull purple and black, makes sombre patches against the bronzing foliage and brilliant reds and carmines of guelder, hip and haw. Buckthorn and elder flourish on the crumbling banks, and the birds hold high revelry over the plenteous feast. If you have never discovered that birds, like dogs, suffer from the vice of greediness, you would be quickly disillusioned on a September day's visit to any of these fruit-laden corners, for you would find birds so gorged they seem utterly incapable of flying, but hop heavily into the brake at your advent, while rabbits scurry over the short turf where the fragile cistus scatters its golden flakes of petals, and pheasants stalk away in uncertainty between haughty disdain of the intruder, and doubt as to his business! Well may they suspect, for Grange Park holds, or held very recently, the record game bag of the county.

On one side lies much wild country, bleak, open downland, but

the lane to the west runs out towards the arched wall of greenery that encloses the Grange estate. So closely grown and clipped are the maple, yew, holly, and hazel of this Brobdingnagian hedge that it has the air of a leafy fortification of which the interspersed ash, oak, and beech trees are the turrets, ending with a fine arch where the beeches on either hand lock their branches together overhead by Swarraton. Between this hamlet and Northington lies the narrow valley of the Candover stream, crossed by a lane with rough and steep pitch down. The modern church stands out half-way up the wooded slope. The old church is now only remembered because Gilbert White was curate there before he had the Selborne living. Inigo Jones built the Grange for Sir Robert Henley, and his descendant "Surly Bob," Baron Henley of the Grange and first Lord Northington, laid out the grounds, but hardly any of the sixteenth-century house was left when the mansion was rebuilt.

One of the main roads from Winchester to Basingstoke passes to the north of the Grange and on by the Candovers. Many Roman remains have been found in the neighbourhood, probably among the earliest parts of the country inhabited; but little remnant of the past is now to be seen, except a yew avenue, doleful record of the vanished manor house of the Worsleys.

The road winds on through Nutley and over Farleigh Hill, through Cliddesden to Basingstoke, with roads and lanes in plenty leading westwards by copse and common, cornlands and pasture. As a change from the usual route to Basingstoke from Winchester it is not unpleasing, and certainly quieter, with very fairly good surface; but if rapid travelling be desired the highway by Popham Lane should be followed as the wider, better, and shorter road. Moreover the ups and downs are so continual that they break its undeviating straightness nearly as well as sundry zigzags might; and, further, there is a nasty bit on the stiff incline of Farleigh Hill, and another by Nutley worse than the worst gradients on the main road.

The two roads part by Lunway's Inn, five miles north of Winchester, the Candover road turning east between Micheldever and Itchen woods before it bends northward above the Grange. At the corner of Itchen Wood a track leads down to Itchen Abbas, and, the top of the hill once gained, a good view of the river valley is to be had. The fine trees of

Ovington and Avington Parks mass the opposite slope, with Hampage Wood clustered thickly in dark patches on the brown ridge of down against the skyline. The Winchester Downs sweep round where the Itchen bends south, and the clump of trees on St. Catherine's Hill just shows above Easton. Possibly once within the memory of man this lane was metalled, so it continues to exist as a third class road on the Ordnance map, though, for the most part, its grass and weedgrown surface looks as if it had been undisturbed for many a year, except by a very occasionally passing cart. Fine old hedges bend over the grass way, hazel and sloe set with haw and buckthorn, a spreading elder or sturdy wayfaring-tree for variety, and bracken encroaches on the highway and under the oaks and birches of the wood. To turn up here from the well-kept main roads, with clipped hedges and frequent traffic, is to touch another age! Truly, England is a magic castle, with a maze of corridors full of many-sized gateways; venture in, and you will find doors greatly varied, and of every period back to the days when a slab of stone or a prickly bush blocked up the entrance before doors were evolved. Often door after door has been tampered with by succeeding generations, the palimpsest is misleading, and not till you penetrate within may you discover into what forgotten age you have plunged.

Some five and a half miles north of its parting from the Candover route, the Winchester-Basingstoke highway is joined by the road from Stockbridge. Trees border the main road for some distance on the east, but on the west it is open, and peeps of hilly ridges may be had now and again beyond wild and unprotected country, utterly lonely and toneless on a day when the clouds sag low and the rain falls lightly but persistently, as though the sky leaked for very tiredness. The peewit's cry rises above the scattered gorse-bushes with melancholy insistence as the rattle of a passing train dies in the misty distance; grass and fallow seem all of a colour with the covey of partridges that whirrs away and melts into nothingness as the birds settle but fifty yards off; the grey smoke of a hidden cottage behind a strip of dark plantation, and the white veil of mist over Winchester to the south, hardly lighten the scene. But come again when the hawthorns bend under a scented load of blossom, when the vivid green of young corn breaks through the chalky soil and the gorse is a blurr of gold, for

then the blues and greens of distance and foreground will have made another picture altogether, hardly recognisable, with colour as subtly rich as the scent of the hedgerows.

The present highway, that for eight miles from King's Worthy follows the line of the Roman road to Silchester, deviates from the old Causeway from the turning to Woodmancote [1] three-quarters of a mile beyond the grounds of Stratton House, till just beyond the Wheat Sheaf Inn, and leaves it again but little more than a mile further on. Popham Lane and the Wheat Sheaf are names as well-known in the history of the H. H. as the Swan at Alresford.

"Draw near, ye frail mortals of every degree,
Who heartily sigh and complain,
We'll find you a medicine, without any fee,
Shall quickly alleviate your pain.
Would you drive away care,
To the Wheatsheaf repair,
Where mirth and good humour embrace,
Our Hampshire Hunt join
While young mirth and old wine,
Enliven the joys of the chase!"

So wrote a worthy parson of Itchen Abbas in the eighteenth century for the "Gentlemen of the Hampshire Hunt" to sing at the monthly hunt dinner—the Wheat Sheaf had a special cellar of port for many years. A more recent hunting song mentions another place in this locality:—

"Free from care, from pain, from sorrow,
Haste to Thorny Down to-morrow;
There shall our steeds outstrip the wind,
Whilst time and age creep far behind."

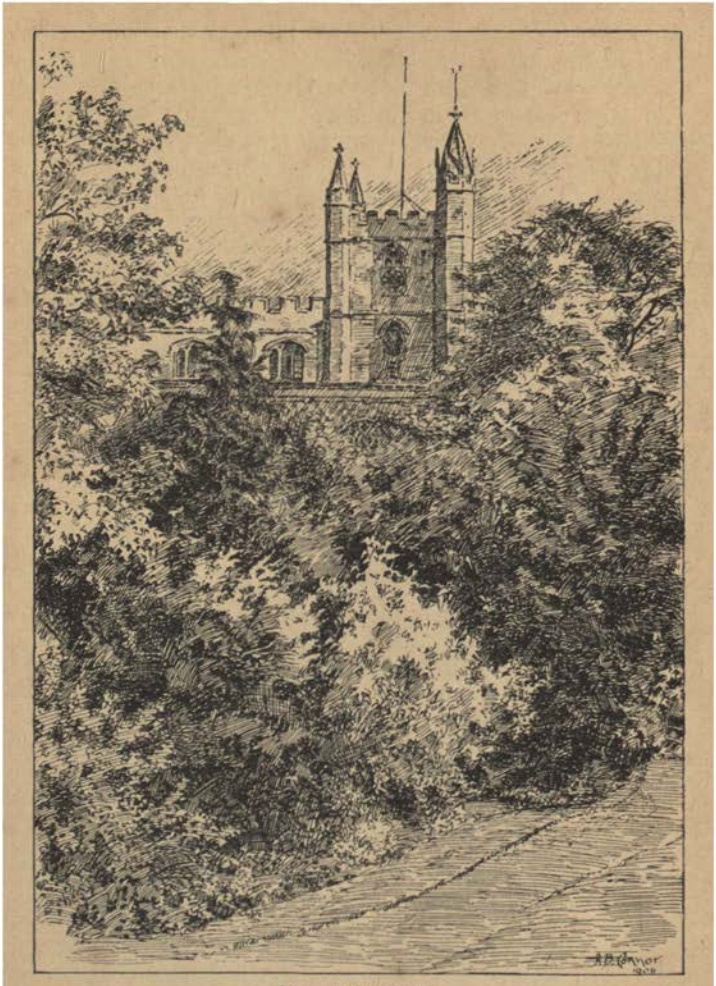
Popham Beacons, by which the Stockbridge road passes, command such an extensive view across some half of the county, that more than one Hampshire man has mentioned the hill in my hearing as among the highest points of the county; but at the most, and that a mile from the Beacons, it only touches 600 feet, and the group of tumuli alongside the road by Cobley Wood have an altitude of nearly eighty feet less. Grey and green, blue and brown, stretch the far hills and valleys, ringing round from the

[1] The late Rev. G. N. Godwin was vicar of Woodmancote-with-Popham from 1893 to 1898; he wrote much about the county, and will be remembered for his special study of *The Civil War in Hampshire*.

heights of Alton to the Winchester Downs, and on by Farley Mount to the hills about Stockbridge, Woolbury Ring and Quarley Hill, and the faint blue of the Wiltshire ranges. From the group of barrows a lane runs straight as a die towards the Roman Causeway. It is a wild old track. Grass, and the litter of last year's foliage cover its surface deeply for half the distance. You jolt down to the snapping crack of dry twigs and the rustle of dead leaves over ruts and stones, felt but not seen, between rough hedges that make a hardly practical, if visible fence to the fields behind, and are all the more beautiful for their raggedness. One pictures the old Romans patrolling this pathway to the Beacons. Their military genius would never ignore such an important outpost, for in the hands of an enemy the road to the north was threatened, and the occupant held the key to many a mile of the surrounding country. The Stockbridge road runs up by a bordering strip of common, past bays of short turf between thickets of gorse, and by ancient twisted thorns overtopped by fir trees, impertinent youngsters! Then the highway drops on the further side of the hill by woodlands that in spring time have a carpet of primroses patterned with the blue of wild hyacinth, and the green involucres set beneath delicate white or pink blossoms of the windflower.

Just over half a mile beyond the cross ways, by the Wheat Sheaf, lanes lead on either side to two delightfully old-world villages, North Waltham and Dummer, once the home of a noted Hampshire sportsman, Mr. Stephen Terry, a contemporary of Assheton Smith. Dummer Church has much to interest the student of antiquities, for it has luckily escaped spoliation at the hands of restorers! It was locked when the writer visited the village, but through the low windows of the little building something could be seen of its old beams and gallery, the unique canopy, that remains untouched though the rood has vanished, and a corner of the fine old pulpit, both Perpendicular work.

The lane from Dummer joins the highway by Kempshott House, which has very varied memories of George IV. When Prince of Wales, he purchased the estate as a hunting box, and to Mrs. Fitzherbert's taste the fitments of the house and arrangement of the grounds are said to have been due. But not only did he spend many happy days here with the unfortu-



Basingstoke Church.

nate lady to whom the best of his life and affections were given, but he also, rather contradictorily it would seem, brought his undesired royal bride, Caroline of Brunswick, to Kempshott

for the honeymoon, before "the bloom of her ugliness," as Colonel Disbrowe put it, had worn off; and further, by gossiping Mrs. Papendick's account, it was here "the Prince had a seraglio, the brother of the females being raised from groom to the head of the stud stables, and at his death, buried with the honours of the royal liveries, and his sisters being afterwards taken into the Queen's household as assistant dressers." The stables were full of valuable horses but, according to a great local authority, "the stable management was bad, and they never appeared in condition." The Prince also kept a pack of foxhounds, for he was a great supporter of hunting, though a bad performer in the field. At one time he spent the hunting season at the Grange, and hunted with Mr. Villebois' hounds, the old Hampshire Hunt, hence the Prince of Wales' plume on the H. H. button.

Four miles more of down-hill road and then trains, more trains, and always more trains, speeding down from London to the West Country or swerving southward to the sea, linking Midlands and coast, looping up rural districts; rows of brick villas that come to abrupt end in open country, as bare and monotonous as any in the shire; white plumes of smoke rising from shunting engines over grey slate roofs to the sky —Basingstoke! A town that may be hurried through with a passing remembrance, as the train leaves the new station, of the discomforts of railway travel when first we waited at that junction for tedious cross-country trains to carry us westwards, where now a through express *via* Andover takes its passengers in half the time. In comparison with many other Hampshire towns and villages it is singularly lacking in evidences of the past. Yet if the face of things be changed, Basingstoke has some older corners than its suburbs of yesterday would suggest, and its archives and histories prove an antiquity indisputable.

CHAPTER VII.

BASING AND THE VYNE.

"Late supping I forbear.
Wine and women I forswear;
My neck and feet I keep from cold.
No marvel then, though I be old,
I am a willow, not an oak:
I chide, but never hurt a stroke."

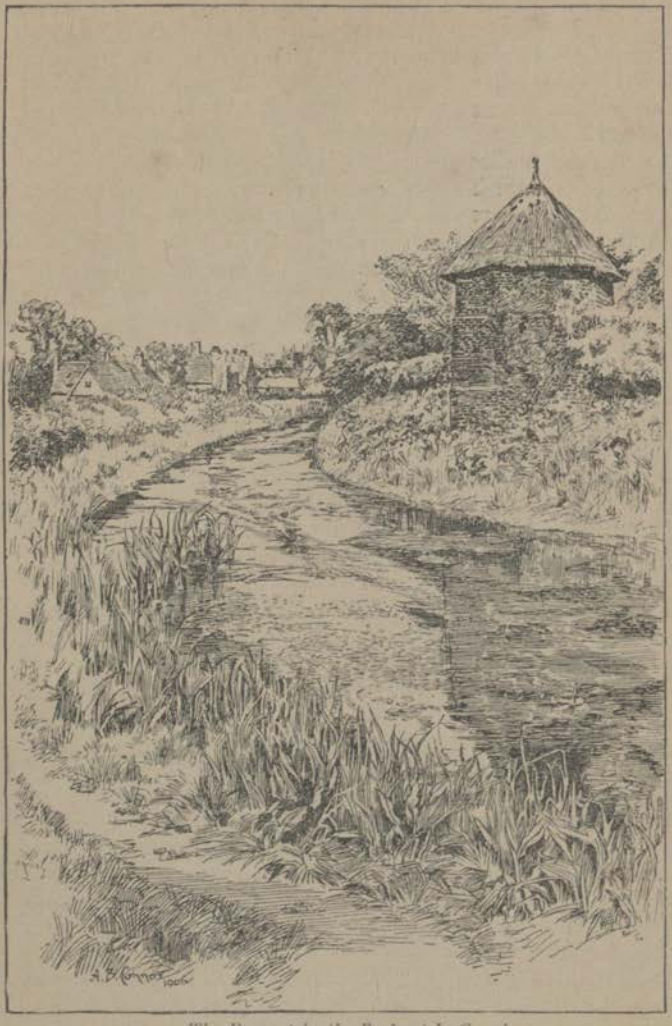
THUS did William Paulet, first Marquis of Winchester, sum up the guiding rules of his successful life, and died full of years and honours, having seen his children's children—103 of them!—and made the old castle of the St. Johns into a palace that evoked the envy of the august Elizabeth herself. He "*got*, *spent*, and *left*, more than any Subject since the Conquest," wrote Fuller, and added two wings to the right and left of the gate-house making it "as large as the Tower of London" and "built upright so that no man can command the roof." Here with pomp and state his Royal Mistress was lavishly entertained; but before the days of civil war, when such a blaze of glory was to circle Basing as to dim all previous displays and records, one of the wings, that to the left, was pulled down on account of the expense incurred in the upkeep of so huge a building. Yet even then it was, Fuller tells—

"the greatest of any subjects' House in England, yea larger than most (Eagles have not the biggest Nests of all Birds) of the King's Palaces. The Motto, *Love Loyaltie*, well practised in it, when, for resistance on that account, it was lately levelled to the ground."

Scarred and broken after many and many a month of siege and bombardment, when Cromwell's troops at length burst through the breaches in the walls that had for so long defied

them, fire broke out, in the middle of the wild scene of devastation and pillage, started none knew how or where. The fierce red flames and rolling smoke drove forth friend and foe alike, while those of the defenders who had sought a hiding-place in the cellars found there an awful tomb. "Slighted" by order of Parliament, the ruined pile became what the deserted Roman city six miles away had long been, a quarry whence "whoever will come for brick or stone shall freely have the same for his pains." So it rests, and the kindly years have covered the battered defences with ivy, hidden the earthworks under flowers and herbage, and to-day peace smiles serenely on the rose-red walls that run by grassy banks, where hawthorns scatter white showers on the green graves of many valiant soldiers —the losses total to something like 2,000. Where the heavy shot shrieked through the smoke-laden air, birds sing undismayed by ought more alarming than the hoot of a motor on the highway half a mile to the south, or the rattle of passing trains along the ugly embankment that mars the beauty of the old-world village. Some battered walls and a broken gatehouse by the green mounds and trenches, for many years alone marked the site of the dramatic and heroic struggle after "the source of all true villainy, beareing down all before it, neither allowing newtrality or permitting peace, to any that desired to be less sinfull than themselves," forced John, the fifth Marquis, to hoist the royal colours in defiance of the revolting Parliament, as Lady Winchester recorded in her diary of the siege.

The Castle, she tells, was in "forme circular, encompassed with a brick rampart lyned with earth, and a very deep trench but dry." It lies not two miles from Basingstoke, down byways that lead by the marshy meadows in which the Lodden twists and turns, to where the weed-grown channel of the Basingstoke Canal runs by the old wall and octagonal dove-cot, and past the remains of "the loftie gate-house with foure turrets looking northwards." Across the road was the Grange and riding-school by the "meades riverlets and a river running from Basing stoake," at the foot of the slopes and rough hedges of Cowdray Down, where the besiegers had their headquarters, and Basingstoke Workhouse is now prominent. The old chalk pit yonder, still "Oliver's Delve," was the post of the Southampton pikemen and troopers. Where that orchard grows the dead were



The Dove-cot by the Basingstoke Canal.

given hurried burial. The "Slaughter Close" by the canal bridge got its name more grimly than the one near Cheriton, for here it was men were slain. The great barn over the way was the riding-school and bears many a mark of Colonel Dalbier's guns, as does the fine village church among the trees to the north-east. The present owner, Lord Bolton, has had the ruins most carefully opened up; not a brick or stone may be moved or added, and one walks over the small flint cobbles that paved the court when the last fight surged through, before fire and ruin laid low the majestic pile. The plan of the old buildings can now be easily traced, the banquet hall, chapel, kitchens, cold storage larder, and so forth, though they are not quite so easily identified with the drawing Wenceslaus Hollar left as memento of the day when he and Inigo Jones were among the illustrious garrison.

From the commencement of the struggle between King and Parliament Basing House was marked by both parties as of notable importance, by reason of its strength and commanding position. Basing, with Donnington in Berks, cut rebellious London off from the west country, and secured communication between loyal Oxford and the south. Parliament looked askance at such a stronghold in the hands of a papistical loyalist, and lest bites should succeed the snarling barks of the opening contest, hastened to draw the fangs that the Cavalier "wolves" should have little withal to damage the Puritan "lambs"! In November, 1641, therefore, Winchester, as a recusant, was ordered "to sell off his arms to such tradesmen as will buy the same." The Marquis was no fire-eating swashbuckler, but, as the *Diary* states, had gone to Basing, "hoping integrity and privacy might have here preserved his quiet," so the armoury was obediently emptied of its store of arms for 1,500 men. The Roundheads, however, left him but little space wherein to indulge his pacific aspirations. Having disarmed they proceeded to attack. But Loyalty House, the great "eye-sorrow" to Parliament men and rebel city merchants—was not many a fat convoy thereafter cut up by the garrison?—was not to fall so easy and early a prey. Twice the small party in the house, though they had but six muskets, beat off the enemy, and preparations were commenced for any eventualities time might bring. As the storm gathered over the land there was desultory fighting in and about

Basing, looting of convoys, marching of troops, visits friendly and inimical, but not till 1643 did operations seriously commence. Then Colonels Norton and Harvey, with two regiments of dragoons, making a threatening move towards Basing, the Marquis went to the King, and 100 musketeers under Lieut.-Colonel Peake were hastily despatched from Oxford, by forced marches, to assist the "six gentlemen armed with six muskets." Colonel Bard, following with a cavalry detachment, found Peake on arrival had beaten off the rebel dragoons.

In August, therefore, Basing House was "begunne, according to the quantity of men now added, to be fortified." Thereafter "report of a puissant army under command of Sir William Waller, to be appointed for the taking of it"; whereupon Winchester took "further commissions, as Colonell and Governor, for the raising of more forces." With November, in bitterly cold and foggy weather, came the enemy. From his base at Farnham Waller made a wide detour, by Alton and the Candovers to attack Basing from the south. Surprise could hardly have been intended, for "drums, trumpets, and guns proclaimed his approach," according to *Mercurius Aulicus*. His artillery proceeded by Basingstoke, and opened fire late in the afternoon from the north-west. Summoned after a preliminary salvo, Winchester scornfully refused to surrender, and the Marchioness as determinedly rejected Waller's offer to allow the women and children to withdraw. So the first great assault began, and they fought till "the edge of the evening." Thrice did Waller attempt to carry the place by storm, and, indeed, it would seem he was within measurable distance of securing his object, for the defenders were hard pressed, the Grange and its stores were captured, the Puritans feasting as they fought. Had Sir William offered to allow the garrison to withdraw then, bag and baggage, Parliament might have held Basing House from November, 1643. He did not, and his chance was gone, despite the arrival of heavy reinforcements of men and guns. It is a fine story of determined valour how the little band within repulsed attack after attack; how again and again a "forlorne hope" made a sortie, and the ladies, led by the Marchioness—sister to Essex, the Parliamentarian General—made bullets from the lead of the roofs, and hurled bricks, tiles, and stones down on the attackers during the strenuous week. Finally, in drenching

rain, the disheartened enemy withdrew, when news came of the advance of Hopton. Waller had lost about 300 men—1,000 some say—of the garrison's losses he reported, "We cannot tell, nor what detriment they received, save only one of their cows." So the Mafeking despatch, "Killed and wounded —one dog," was not original after all!

Followed alarums and excursions: Hopton marching to within a mile of Waller's base; artillery duels at what was then long range; damages made good; and Sir Ralph's withdrawal to Winchester, to hear within a fortnight of the fatal fight at Alton, and three months later to meet his enemy and retire, defeated in his turn, from Cheriton. A sad day that for Basing, when the Cavaliers came hurrying up the narrow lanes from the south, crying, "The Kingdom's lost!" Hopton passed on to Reading, leaving the wounded and his chaplain, Dr. Thomas Fuller, who wrote part of his *Worthies of England* amid the din and uproar of subsequent operations. Yet sadder were to follow, when enemies within the walls wrought direr mischief than the foe without. Hunger, sickness, and alas! treachery, sapped the stronghold more effectually than ever had the Puritan engineers. Edward Paulet turned traitor, and though the plot was discovered and the ringleaders severely dealt with—Lord Edward was degraded to the post of hangman, and the name is anathema in the family to this day—the flame of discontent, once engendered, smouldered to ultimate disaster.

Meanwhile, the siege was renewed and the House more closely invested than ever. April, May, and June saw continual skirmishing, captures of supplies and convoys by the besiegers, and discord on the increase among the defenders. The church was turned into stables by the enemy, the vaults were broken open, and with supreme irony the lead coffins of past generations were turned into bullets for the discomfiture of their descendants! The fighting grew more desperate, days of strain and trouble came apace, till mid-June brought a night of frantic effort on the part of the Royalists, a night of fearful hurly-burly, flying enemy, blazing houses, confused troopers, horses stampeding, and above all the clamour of the church bells, rung to summon reinforcements by some Puritan, with more wits about him than most of his panic-stricken comrades. Norton appealed to Parliament for help. Basing

House was as much the grave of reputations for the rebel leaders as Africa afterwards became for English politicians! But by July the enemy had pushed their trenches up to "within half-musket shot," yet, despite their reinforcements, the only reply the Marquis vouchsafed when summoned to surrender was, "It is a crooked Demand, and shall receive its answer suitable," and this when water was "only puddly," and the hot weather was playing the mischief with the meat store, despite all precautions. August brought another enemy, small-pox, to dismay the gallant band, but to balance this fresh disaster a brilliant sortie under Cuffaud and Bryant again spread panic among the besiegers, nervously expectant of a relieving force.

Relief came at last, when Gage made his forced march in September, leaving Oxford at 10 p.m. on the 9th, and arriving on the morning of the 11th. Tired as his men were they had spirit enough to fight a way over Chinham Down and bring supplies from Basingstoke to the famished garrison. Then, at 11 p.m. on the 12th, Gage started back by Burghfield Bridge and Pangbourne, reaching Wallingford by nightfall on the 13th. And so an end to all Norton's chances, and with Charles moving on Whitchurch, "hoping to break up the siege," came orders from Parliament to retire. But Norton's departure was no gain to the defenders. On September 21st Essex and Manchester joined forces at Basing—upwards of 20,000 troops lay outside the defiant walls. The church was retaken, and all Cuffaud's efforts could not beat the Puritans back from that vantage point. November found the garrison again in straits for food, and Manchester returning after the second indecisive Newbury fight. However, the Parliament men had no stomach for a winter in the wet trenches. The King was prepared to march from Hungerford. The garrison's sorties were determined as ever. When Gage, recently knighted, led 1,000 horse to relieve the Marquis once more, he found Waller in hot haste for safer quarters, and naught for his men to do but unload the sack of provisions each carried, and assist make good the havoc wrought in the defences during the long bombardment.

The next year, 1645, brought the third and last act in the drama, and the opening scene is one of the sorriest in the story. Spring was over the land and still the "Marquis's own colours . . . the motto of which was *Donec pax redeat terris*,"

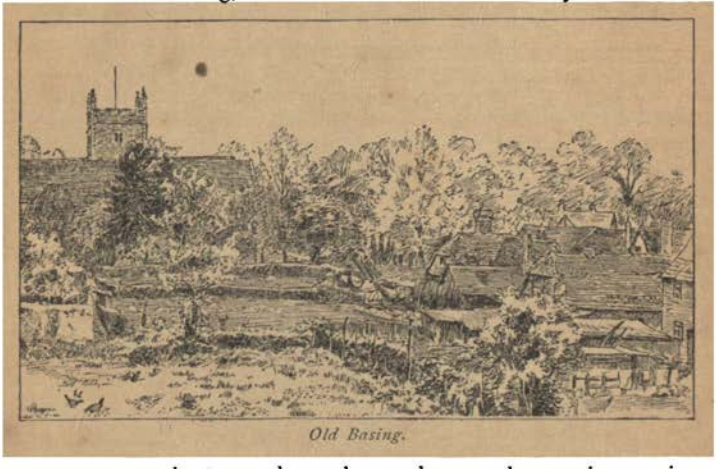
floated above the walls. How long the end might have been postponed had no seeds of discontent existed within one cannot say, but even common politics could not bind when religious differences bred dissension. On May 1st the Protestant contingent marched out to join Goring in Berkshire. A month later Naseby was fought, Cromwell had been made Lieut.-General, the campaign in the west was begun, and the shadows were closing down on the devoted garrison, so sadly reduced, in "Basting House." Dutch Dalbier with his sappers and great guns started the next scene amid heavy rain. When Bristol fell Dalbier was still entrenching, and the bombardment grew fiercer day by day. If there were then no lyddite fumes he made a sufficiently noxious substitute with arsenic, sulphur, and other chemicals, mixed with damp straw, wherewith to smoke out the Royalist fox; and his men were cheered on by interminable sermons that told of worse and "More Sulphure for Basing!"[1] At the beginning of October Winchester Castle was taken, and within a week the Lieut.-General in person had summoned Basing, the "nest of Romanists," and an attempt to send relief from Oxford—brave Gage had died at Culham Bridge in January—proved futile. Still even in their last throes the Royalists "foxes and wolves" could bite. In a sortie on October 13th—alack! it proved their last—such was the indomitable fire and dash of the forlorn hope that two prisoners of importance were taken. One, Colonel Hammond, subsequently saved the life of the Marquis. But numbers told. The evening of the next day victorious Oliver was writing "a good account of Basing" to the Speaker—£200,000 worth of loot was "a good encouragement" for the Puritan party—and the Marquis, a prisoner at the Bell Inn at Basingstoke, was "being pressed, by Mr. Peters arguing with him." Pressed but not bested. "Basing House was called *Loyalty*" and "the King might have a day again." He lived to see the day when peace did return to the land, and taste the disappointments of many loyalists after the Restoration. Dryden's well-known epitaph tells that under the Englefield tomb lies "He who in impious times undaunted stood"—John Paulet, "the Great Loyalist."

Basing had probably been the scene of obstinate struggles even

[1] Sermon preached by a Hampshire man and Winchester scholar, William Beech, on Sunday, September 21st, and published in 1645. It runs to 32 small quarto pages.

before the Celts threw up the earthen ramparts on this vantage ground, fortifications that availed little against Vespasian's legions. Then in 870 Ethelred and Alfred, after Ashdown, here again met and fought the reassembled Danes, and were worsted in the stubborn fight—an echo of that battle, or of Ethelwald of Mercia's raid in 904, comes down to these days in the name of "Lick Pit."

Apart from its share in the heroic struggle of 1642-5, Basing Church has much to note, and the heraldic decorations throughout the church are of special interest. It is a handsome building, and the seventeenth-century red brick



Old Basing.

tower among the trees above the roadway makes an impressive picture. Traces of the stormy scenes of war are visible without, but for some reason, as unknown as inexplicable, the Puritan fanatics never destroyed an image of the Virgin and Child in a niche over the west window. Remains of the Norman building will be at once detected in the plain round arches under its central tower to north and south. The old apsidal chancel was rebuilt in the Early English period. The transepts were replaced by chantry chapels. The arches and piers of the nave arcades, and the high east and west tower arches, are mostly of brick and plaster, and said to be a restoration of the old Transitional Norman. The nave windows were also

re-set. Probably the work was a seventeenth-century restoration after the war, when a brief to collect funds for this purpose was read in all churches. Four Paulet altar tombs under late Perpendicular arches lie between the chancel and the two chapels, which are entered by narrow four-centre arched doorways, with small squints in the east jambs. The tracery in the north-east chapel and the north windows is of wood.

As regards the manor, it was given at the Conquest, with fifty-four other Hampshire manors, to the great Norman Baron Hugh de Port. Recent excavations have discovered the foundations of the Norman Castle below those of Old Basing House. The Manor passed by marriage to the St. Johns. Robert de St. John was permitted by Henry III "to fix a pole upon the bann of his moat at Basing," and was further allowed to enclose his "Basinge Pallis," deepen and palisade the moat, and "keep it so fortified during the King's pleasure." Male heirs died out, and the manor in the time of Richard II passed to the Poynings by marriage. Their heiress, Constance, married Sir John Paulet, of Somerset, whose great-grandson declared, "*Ortus sum ex solice, non ex quercu.*" After the Restoration Charles, son of the Loyal Marquis, was created Duke of Bolton. He built a new house in Hackwood Park, which Inigo Jones designed, instead of restoring Basing, but spent most of his time at Abbotstone, feigning madness, to avoid the many pitfalls of those troubled days.

The Cuffaud who played a heroic part in Basing siege, "a man of great account amongst them, and a notorious Papist," was, according to Hugh Peters, "slain by the hands of Major Harrison, that godly and gallant gentleman"—yet others call him "Butcher Harrison"!—slayer also of "Robinson the Player, who a little before the storm was known to be mocking and scorning the Parliament and our Army." Peters' "Major Cuffle" came of an ancient county family with royal blood in their veins—legitimately; for Marie, granddaughter of Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, and niece therefore of Cardinal Pole, who was descended from two sons of Edward III, being endangered in the discomfortable times when a king with less hereditary right than her own ruled the land, sought refuge in private life here in Hampshire, and married William Cuffaud. Nothing but a name remains to

tell of the old moated grange of the family that lay to the north of Basing, and an illuminated pedigree found in a Basingstoke cottage about 1760. It had been used to stop up a broken window! The pedigree, with the picture of Marie's descendant Winifred, the Nun of Cuffaud, painted by la Belle, is now at The Vyne.

The roads round The Vyne are very different now to what they were even a century ago, when a common saying ran, "The Vyne was the last place upon the earth, and Beaurepaire was beyond it." Horace Walpole, complaining of its dampness, declared, "I don't believe the Vine is within the verge of the rainbow," while for the roads he had no good word—"In October, you will find it a little difficult to persuade me to accompany you there on stilts," he wrote to Montagu, and told another friend, "No post but a dove can come from thence." But this was before William Wiggett Chute improved both house and estate. One comes on it by gravelled lanes, with generous grassy borders, shady banks with northern aspect where late primroses linger, and hedges that in sweet June are almost hidden in a lacy cobweb of white blossom.

The Vyne stands some hundred yards back from the road between Sherborne St. John and Bramley, a large, two-storied house, with wings at either end, and beyond the eastern one the famous chapel. It must be confessed that seen from the lane its diapered red brick, and the white of its stone quoins and painted window sashes—great innovations in the days when Speaker Chute removed the original stone mullions—has a cold, even an unfinished air, like a face without eyebrows. It asks for kindly creepers to veil its unclad sides, and suggest comfort instead of chill grandeur. However, this is not the best view of The Vyne, "one of the principal houses in goodly building in all Hamptonshire," yet, as it was in Leland's day, and not only one of the best-known places in the county, but also one of the few manor houses that retain their ancient state, for such as survived the fate of Basing House fell like its neighbour, Beaurepaire, before eighteenth-century renovators. The Vyne to-day is very much as it was when built by the first Lord Sandys four centuries ago, though the large Base Court on the north side vanished with the stone mullions, and the beautiful staircase was not put in till some hundred years later. From the de Ports the manor passed to the families of St. John,

Cowdray, Fyffhide of Cholderton, Sandys, and Brocas. The existing house was not built until after the property was, as Leland says, "recovered" by Sir William Sandys, who was "very mad, exceeding mad," if Shakespeare did not make his son belie his memory to fair Anne Boleyn. For the "Lord Sands" of *King Henry VIII* was Sir William Sandys of The Vyne, afterwards Lord Sandys, and the builder of this historic mansion, where Henry and Anne visited him, and their daughter, thirty-four years later, was the guest of his great-grandson, the third Lord. Elizabeth had sad business on hand at the time, her unfortunate rival and cousin, Mary of Scots, was in her power, and from The Vyne she wrote instructions to the Earl of Huntingdon for the poor Queen's safe keeping. Some years later Queen Bess visited the Marquis of Winchester, when she did—

"that none of her ancestors ever did, neither that any prince of Christendom could do, that was, she had in her Progresse in her subjects' houses, entertained a royal ambassador, and had royally entertained him."[1]

The ambassador was the Duc de Biron, sent by Henry IV to announce his marriage with Marie de Medici, and he was lodged at The Vyne, which—

"was furnished with hangings and plate from the Tower and Hampton Court, and with seven score beds and furniture, which the willing and obedient people of Hampshire upon two days' warning had brought thither to lend to the Queen."

When one turns to the inventory—a very complete one—made on her husband's death by Elizabeth Sandys, the grandmother of de Biron's host, the need for preparation on such an exhaustive scale becomes very plain, for the huge house would appear to have been remarkably ill-furnished, even for those days; for instance, in "The great dynyng chamber," there were only curtains, hangings :—

"A large fyne carpet of Turkey making vxiij yardes ;
Another Turkey carpet for a cubbord with a deyse ;
A cubbord of boardes with a deyse ;
A chayer of black velvet trymed or garnyshed with golde olde ;
A great payr of anndyerns of iron ;
A large table of ffyrre, with a payr of trestelles v yards long."

[1] Stowe's *Annals.*

and nothing else but cushions! Over fifty: but of these "cusshennes" a dozen were "very sore worne and old," and another dozen "cusshyons of dyvers sortes, sore worne and old." The "Chapel Parlour" had only one hanging and a "clocke, large, with a chyme." When Queen Anne Boleyn slept in the "Queen's Lying Chamber," a "lyvery cubbord with ij almeres," "A fflanders chayer; A payr of myddell andeirons," with "A little cubbord carpet, Turkey making," was all the furniture deemed necessary besides the hangings, and the "trusse bedsted with iiij gilt pillers and pomelles gilt," its "materys" and "counterpoynt," with other furnishings. Twenty-one horses are mentioned in the stables, others, with the mares and foals, were "at grasse."

On the death of the third lord the manor passed by the marriage of his only surviving child to her son, Colonel Henry Sandys of Lattymers, who was mortally wounded at Cheriton Fight. Five months before that Waller's troops held The Vyne, and legend says the chapel windows were buried in the bed of the stream that flows through the grounds. Certainly the windows escaped uninjured, which argues that legend is correct as to the hiding, anyway. The Vyne, five years later, was sold to the successful barrister Chaloner Chute, Speaker of the House of Commons during Richard Cromwell's short protectorate. "He would never have subjected himself to that place," wrote Clarendon, "if he had not entertained some hope of being able to serve the King." He did not, however, live to see the Restoration, but, after doing much to improve his Hampshire estate, died in 1659, "to the regret of all parties," the epitaph on his monument in the Tomb Chamber notes. John Chute, the great-grandson of Speaker Chute, was very intimate with Gray and Horace Walpole. He succeeded to the property on the death of his brother, who left no will otherwise, as the two brothers were not on the best of terms, Walpole might never have paid his frequent visits—despite the bad roads!—to its "divine chapel," "the most heavenly Chapel in the world." He at any rate had been "absolutely persuaded" Anthony Chute would disinherit his friend John. "There is a vote of the Strawberry Committee for great embellishments of the Chapel," he wrote, and planned further for "a semicircular court with a gate like Caius College," two towers, a Roman theatre, and many other alterations and

additions. He grumbled, too, when his friend did not carry out all the schemes. However, John Chute did do much to beautify and improve the place. Gray was unfortunate in his Hampshire experiences. After his first visit to The Vyne he made a tour in the county, overtaxed his strength, and for the rest of his life suffered ill-health in consequence. "My loss is quite irreparable," Walpole wrote when John Chute died, "To me he was the most faithful and secure of friends and a most delightful companion."

CHAPTER VIII

TO THE BERKSHIRE BORDER

ON the edge of the arable lands to the north of Basingstoke and the London and South Western line, lie the Sherbornes, up byways to right and left of a main road that leads to Reading or Newbury. Sherborne St. John took its name from the St. John family; Monk Sherborne was so called when, in King Stephen's time, Henry de Port divided the Sherborne Manor and founded a priory, a cell of the Abbey of St. Vigor of Cerisy, and assigned to it that portion of his estates.

There is a wooden sundial on the south porch of the church at Sherborne St. John, and over the door an old mural monument begs you,

of your cHerete pra
y for the sovles of
James Spyre an Jane
his wyf which cavse
d this porch to be
mad at ther cost
the yere of our Lod 1533

The curious square font dates from Norman times, but the church is mainly Perpendicular. At the top of the north aisle on a triangular reading desk is a chained set of a book that once was ordered to be kept in every parish church, with inscription to the effect that :—

"Theſe three volumes of Mr. *Fox's Martyrology* were Given to this Church of *Sherborne St. John* by Mr. *William Jackson*, late Vicar thereof, and by his Siſter Mrs. *Elizabeth Gardiner*, widdow, and by Mr. *Ebenezer* Foreneſs, Rector of this ſame Church."

Bound in with the second volume is a copy of "An Act for

the better Explanation and supplying the Defects of the former Laws for the Settlement of the Poor," dated William and Mary 1691, about which date the volumes were given; they were rebound some thirty or forty years ago. The chief interest though centres in the chantry chapel, founded by Sir Bernard Brocas, who willed forty marks to the church, approximately £500, which would in those days have amply sufficed to build the Brocas chapel and do much restoration. Sir Bernard died in 1395 and was buried with great pomp in Westminster Abbey, where Sir Richard Pexsall, a descendant, as will be seen, through a daughter of the house of Brocas, afterwards found sepulchre, mainly thanks to the energies of his widow.[1]

Little more than a mile away, set in a ring of pasture land that June's buttercups turn to a sheet of gold against which the churchyard yew looms in jetty shadow, Monk, or West, Sherborne church stands on the slope of a hill rising to the Roman entrenchment at Woodgarston Farm, an outlying spur of the Downs. Much of the original Norman building remains, and the curious will find under the worn ribs of the barge-board fifteenth-century porch a faint survival of old colouring. To the north the valley is full of fine elms, and above and below the church are delightful old chalk pits, overgrown with trees and creepers. They are very beautiful, these Hampshire chalk pits, and there are many in the neighbourhood, where flowering shrubs and emerald turf set against the crumbling, stained, white walls, make a luxury of colour in the changing light and shade. Very venerable also: in one of the Sherborne chalk pits Roman coins have been found, telling of the days Pliny wrote about, when the British agriculturist marled the land with chalk, or "fat earth," much as he doth to this day. The village of Monk Sherborne straggles along the road over the rising ground to the north, and from it runs a lane to Pamber, by a splash and a foot-bridge across the tiny stream that after feeding the fish stews of the Priory passes on through the grounds of Beaurepaire to join the Loddon. The Priory ruins are some two miles from Monk Sherborne church. All that now remains consists of the chancel and a portion of the central tower, restored by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1843, and

[1] These and all other facts concerning the Brocas family are delightfully told in *The Family of Brocas of Beaurepaire and Roche Court*, by Captain Montagu Burrows, from which I have skimmed the following accounts.

used as the parish church of Pamber ; but some idea of what the building must have been may be gained by comparing the chancel with the fine old wall of flints and slabs which still divides the churchyard from the neighbouring garden and farmstead. When the cellars of this house were made the workmen came upon several lead coffins. The foundations of the transept on the north have also been traced. The yew in the litten is a grand old tree, of many centuries' growth, and probably saw the first stones of the Abbey of the Blessed Virgin and St. John laid by its Norman founder, the original,

Pamber Priory Church.

may be, of the finely carved oak effigy within. It was endowed with many gifts from the de Port family. During the French wars a Benedictine from Bristol was put in charge of the buildings and made responsible for the services in the chapel and at the chantry of The Vyne. When Henry VI consficated the alien houses, Sherborne Priory fell to Eton, but eventually, Edward IV having given it to God's House, Southampton, it came to its present owners, Queen's College, Oxford.

All round this neighbourhood the thick hedgerows, the fine timber, and the grass-bordered lanes, when spring decks

them with her wealth of blossom, make a very dreamland for a ramble. Such a display of the national colours there is when wild geranium and ragged robin, or, later, the more correct if less obtrusive scarlet of the pimpernel, mix with the blue of forget-me-not and speedwell, and the white stars of the greater stitchwort! Nor is the eye only delighted, for among the mosses and ferns of the banks primroses cluster thickly, and every errant breeze bears their delicate perfume blent with sweet whiffs from some hidden clump of white violets. Then from a shady lane you may come upon a stretch of wild land, where the broom in full blaze of blossom hangs like golden clouds over the purple-brown heath. By such open spaces away on the Berkshire border the once-important Roman city of Silchester lies silent, her waste places hidden under waving grasses, and her desolation veiled by a kindly protection of covering earth.

But before passing the little bourne that may once have been the northern limit of the kingdom of Wessex, there is more to recall about the family of Brocas and their estate of Beaurepaire and another village deserves attention—the village Miss Mitford wrote of in "Bramley Maying," one of her *Country Sketches*, recalling that pretty old time custom "a meeting of the lads and lassies of two or three parishes who assemble in certain erections of green boughs called "May-houses to dance." Bramley was probably a settlement in a forest clearing in Saxon times. The forest that lingers yet, by Tadley, spread over all this district long after the Romans had cut their roads through to Silchester and London from Old Sarum and Winchester. Bramley is somewhat of a puzzle for a stranger to find by way of these lanes, though easy enough from its small station on the branch Reading to Basingstoke line, for there appear to be so many Bramleys, or so it seemed when the writer, astray thereabout for the first time, sought direction from a kindly old dame by a cottage door, on whose gentle face time had laid a net-work of wrinkles till it rivalled the apples on her kitchen shelf. Finally, "Bramley Street, we calls it, where the church is," was differentiated. It stands on the northern slope of the stream passed by Pamber, a cluster of thatched and tiled cottages smothered in hawthorns and laburnums, above which rise elm trees and the low, square, battlemented tower of the church. Fronting the road where

the lane from Bramley Corner runs into the Street is a very picture of an old black and white dwelling, with some genuine old work among the much patched panels inside. It is now divided into three tenements and has been known past memory as the Old Manor House, so the aged villager by the worn doorstep declared, and in reply to a question as to its date and his tenancy clinched both with many nods of his white head :—"Aye, aye, sir. I were bornded and breded in this yer house, bornded and breded I were"!

The church is a quaint patchwork of odds and ends, flints, bricks, plaster, and tiles that once were part of some *domus* in

Old Manor House, Bramley.

Silchester. The old frescoes are somewhat indistinct and more curious than beautiful. Among the earliest is one, over what was the south door, of the murder of Thomas à Becket, probably one of the first representations of that tragic scene. A mural monument recalls how in this peaceful spot Dr. Thomas Shaw, traveller and writer, spent the closing years of his life, being appointed vicar in 1740. When Algiers had an English factory Shaw was chaplain there, and the result of his antiquarian researches and expeditions to Egypt and neighbouring countries were given, in *Travels: or*

Observations on several parts of Barbary and the Levant, to an evidently appreciative world, for the work was translated into German, Dutch, and French. Pococke, another Orientalist, and a Hampshire man by birth, attacked the *Travels*, but Shaw, according to his biographer, "ably vindicated his statements." The weather vane on the church will remind lovers of Sir Roger de Coverley of that good knight's visit to Westminster Abbey:—"Sir Roger, planting himself at our historian's elbow, was very attentive to everything he said, particularly to the account he gave us of the lord who had cut off the King of Morocco's head."[1]—for the weather vane bears the Brocas crest: A Moor's head in profile couped at the neck proper; on the head an Eastern crown, or. The historian of the Brocas family relegates this tale to the regions of myth.

Miss Mitford was "very much struck" when she visited the church, especially with the Brocas monument in the Beaurepaire aisle, "that rare thing, a monument fine in itself, and finer in its situation"; but she was misled by the inscription and so wrote of "the proud family of B." possessing "the surrounding property from the time of the Conqueror." Now John Brocas, founder of the family, was one of three brothers educated at the Court of Edward II and his successor. A Gascon knight, by name Arnald de Brocas, is mentioned by the chroniclers as having fallen *in partibus Scotiæ*, and this fact, in connection with the upbringing of the Brocas brothers, has led to the assumption that the royal *protégés* were the sons of Arnald, probably a victim at Bannockburn. At any rate John de Brocas was *valettus* to the King in 1314, and ten years later his brother Bernard was rector of Guildford, and Arnold, the youngest, became Master of the Horse to Prince John. On John de Brocas was bestowed the post of *Custos' equorum regis*, no sinecure under the third Edward, with his large studs and all his "coursers, palfreys, trotters, hobbies, genets, hengests, and somers," not to mention the important "'dextrarii,' or 'great horses.'" The King not only knew a good horse but paid high prices for his fancy, as witness such items in the Issues of the Exchequer as:—

"for the purchase of the three undermentioned chargers, to wit, one called Pomers, of a grey colour, with a black head, price 120*l*; another

[1] *Spectator*. No. 329.

called Lebryt, dappled, with grey spots, price 70*l*; and the third, called Bayard, of a bright brown-bay, with the two hind feet white, price 50*l*."

or at least £2,400, £1,400, and £1,000 of our money. But those days saw the apotheosis of the horse. He had no rival. Without him war, commerce, even everyday intercourse was, literally, at a standstill. He gave the very name to the age—*chevalry*. So John Brocas, *Gardein de nos grands chevaux*, in official "tunic of blue, and cape of white Brussels cloth," was an important and much occupied personage.

The first grant of lands in Hampshire to the family appears to be certain forfeited property of one Hode, outlaw and felon, at Basingstoke in 1337. Sir John de Brocas was then Chief Ranger of Windsor, and Warden of Nottingham Gaol, in addition to being Master of the Horse. But the Brocas who cut his name highest on the pinnacle of fame was Bernard, Sir John's third son. If the annals of the clan held nothing beyond a bare account of his achievements they would have interest more than common, even for those days of war and adventure, but what of his private life old deeds and documents reveal is matter for romance to satisfy the most exacting taste for varied scene and thrilling incident; there is no need to trench on such legendary tales as that immortalised by Addison's light touch. Friend and contemporary of the Black Prince, of William of Wykeham, and others of famous name in a brilliant age, fortune from the outstart promised fair to young Brocas, and the year following the purchase of Beaurepaire Sir Bernard added to his wealth and estates by wedding Agnes, daughter of Sir Mauger Vavasour, of Denton, and heiress of his manors in York and Northants. Hereafter of this marriage, for a space, no record. "Happy is the nation that has no history," but here it seems was much, though the account be lost, for six years later a deed of divorce was "celebrated," and the very absence of data is suggestive. The story must be put together by deduction, and the total goes to prove "That neither is most to blame," despite the complicating factor of an unauthorised young Bernard. Agnes married Henry de Langfield, and Sir Bernard kept her manors, though he shortly afterwards returned the most valuable to her; hence it is possible that on one of the knight's foreign expeditions—for business, for war, for adventure, we know not—a false report of his death may have come to the lady's ears, and

subsequently, in all innocence, she yielded to the suit of an old friend and neighbour. At any rate it is evident that they all knew their business better than we can ever pretend to do, which is probably more generally the case than the censorious would admit.

To play the part of Enoch Arden were sufficient freak of fate for most men, but fortune dealt not unstinted favours only to Sir Bernard. To balance success on the field of Mars, his next essay in Cupid's tourney failed also, for he aspired to the hand of the Fair Mâid of Kent herself, no less! The story is told in Harding's *Metrical Chronicle* how:—

> "Earl John of Kent dead was afore sothely
> Earl Edmonde's sonne, to whom Dame Johan truely,
> His sister, was heyre; whom the Erle Mountague
> Of Salisbury had wed of mayden newe,
> And her forsoke, after repudiate,
> Whom his stewarde, Sir Thomas Holand wed,
> And gatte on her Thomas Erle of Kent late,
> And John Holland her other sonne she hed.
> Thomas their father died of sickness bested,
> The Prince her wowed unto a Knight of his."

and the old French *Chronique des quatres premiers Valois* continues the tale of this vicarious wooing:—

"*Le Prince pour le dit chevalier parla á la dicte Dame de Hollande par plusieurs foiz . . . 'Belle cousine, j'ay a vous parler pour ung des preux chevaliers d'Angleterre, et avec ce il est moult gentilz homs.*"

But the lady preferred the pleader to his client. After this fashion, therefore, our fourteenth-century Enoch Arden played also the *rôle* of Miles Standish.

Sir Bernard does not seem to have needed much consoling, for immediately after the marriage of the Prince he wed another widow, relict of Sir John de Borhunte, who brought him, besides rich manors, the Mastership of the Royal Buckhounds,[1] and on her death he assuaged his grief by founding chantries to her memory, and—marrying another widow! Meanwhile, in 1353, as "the result of a timely loan to John Pecche, the previous lord," Sir Bernard had purchased the estate of

[1] The interesting story of the hereditary Mastership belongs to another county, but it remained in the Brocas family for two hundred and sixty-seven years.

Beaurepaire, and the fact that he did not start rebuilding till the year before he divorced the lady Agnes, gives support to the theory of a prolonged absence in the interim. Sir Bernard lived for some sixty-five years; he had taken part in the French wars, had held many important posts, besides being Constable of Aquitaine, Master of the Buckhounds, Constable of Corfe Castle, Warden of Episcopal Parks, Controller of Calais, Chamberlain to Queen Anne, and Captain of Sandgate Castle. In Hampshire he was a Knight of the Shire and Commissioner for Defence. A great man truly, and worthy of his place in Westminster's Abbey. He was succeeded at Beaurepaire by another Bernard, his son by his second wife Mary de Roches. The story of his attainder and the consequent forfeiture of the Beaurepaire estates belongs to the "dark Conspiracy" of 1399–1400, when "A dozen of them" had—

> ". . . ta'en the sacrament,
> And interchangeably set down their hands,
> To kill the King at Oxford."[1]

But Shakespeare's Fitzwater was hardly correct in assuring Bolingbroke that he had—

> ". . . from Oxford sent to London
> The heads of Brocas and Sir Bennet Seely,
> Two of the dangerous consorted traitors."[2]

for Sir Bernard was tried in London in February and beheaded at Tyburn. "Thus set upon a bloody horizon, along with the sun of Plantagenet, the star of Brocas."[3] Four generations succeeded at Beaurepaire, and then the direct line male ended in the daughter of William Brocas, who lies by her husband Ralph Pexsall at Sherborne St. John. It was in their day that Henry VIII paid a visit to "Baraper," but their son, Sir Richard, preferred his new manor house at Steventon. His daughter married her cousin, Bernard Brocas of Horton, and so, she being an only child, the old name returned to Beaurepaire. According to the family legend this marriage was by way of compromising a lawsuit over the Mastership of the Royal Buckhounds between Sir Richard and the Buckingham-

[1] *King Richard II*, v. 2.
[2] *Ibid.* v. 6.
[3] Burrows, *op. cit.* p. 140.

shire branch of the family. This period of family quarrels and law suits was followed by the wild career of the scamp of the family, Sir Pexsall Brocas. Not only was he charged with riot and forgery in 1603, but, as an historian of his day relates—

> On Sunday, October 24, 1613, Sir Pecsall Brocas did open penance at Paul's Cross: he stood in a white sheete, and held a stick in his hand, having been formerly convicted before the High Commissioners for secret and notorious adulteries with divers women." [1]

which does not seem to have much affected the roué, for he went with "thirty men in scarlet that waited upon him to the Lord Mayor . . . to demand a dinner after doing penance."

Beaurepaire had its share of turmoil and sorrow during the Civil War. One heir was found dead in a ditch outside Oxford, and the manner of his dying has never been ascertained. There was division too in the family—Thomas Brocas, uncle of the dead youth, joined the Roundhead faction. The old house, strongly built and surrounded by its moat, "very fit to be fortified," so judged a Parliamentarian writer, was held as an outpost from Basing by two Royalist troops of horse and sixty musketeers, but on the approach of the enemy, as the Puritan scribes recorded, they—

> "fled to Basing, whither they were pursued with good execution done upon them, a welcome business to Barkshire and Hampshire; for that from this house the country was plundered as far as Reading." [2]

Eventually, after many "complicated transactions . . . the senior and junior branches of the family changed places." Jane, sole heir-at-law, in 1660, of the elder branch, and wife of Sir William Gardiner, settled at Roche Court, and Thomas, son of the Roundhead Brocas, had Beaurepaire. The house was re-built in Georgian days and sold in 1873. The long and fine avenue leads direct into a lane that loops towards the line of the old Roman road, part of which William Brocas enclosed in the property in 1415.

Not by the Roman Causeway but by very English lanes do we get to where Silchester of to-day straggles around an irregular bit of gorse-grown common and up through the dark line of firs that fringe the Berkshire side. To the south-west, beyond the trees

[1] Stowe, *History of England.*
[2] *Perfect Diurnal*, April 25, 1645.

of Pamber Forest, the Downs break the blue distance, and when the sun gives full value to the vivid heath colouring, and the nodding clover heads in bordering fields glow blood-red between the ox-eye daisies, none need wonder at the Roman choice of a site so favoured; a fair, a pleasant land, and rich withal, apart from its strategical importance at the parting of the ways. Nathless, when winter gales sweep over these exposed spaces, and the snow hides all but the gaunt, black skeletons of the trees, Silchester stands declared what the changing round of fickle Fortune made her in the long ago, an abomination of desolation. But no such melancholy scene greeted the writer on first crossing the Berkshire border to make acquaintance with *Calleva Atrebatum*. True, the spring day showed more tears than smiles; yet even in a veil of drizzling rain gorse and heather held warm notes denied by dim, grey sky and dimmer distances. The mistiness was not inappropriate after all, for were we not about to peer into the "old grey histories" of a past yet more distant and dim?

Down in the meadows west of the farmstead, by the east angle of the old city wall, the grass was seamed and cut by long ridges of upturned soil, clay, black and friable; in the trenches, two or three feet below the surface, lay the most lately-opened-out ruins of the city; long, low, intersecting lines of wall, built of flints set in mortar that no longer permitted of rough handling; here and there a bit of pavement, with small, scattered squares of red tile—*Peccavi!* one acts paper-weight at the moment of writing!—broken slabs of heavier tile and flanged tiles that once formed a roof; fragments of pottery; a handful of rough nails encrusted with the mouldering rust of centuries—that was all of old *Calleva* then visible. But on every side mounds and depressions mark the plan of the city more clearly now than when eighteenth-century antiquaries—acting on the hint of the local tradition quoted by Camden, that the differing growths in the cornfields were due to the poorer nourishment afforded by the lesser depth of soil above the hidden walls—probed along the lines of stunted wheat, to make a chart of the lost city.

Excavations were continued in 1833, when the baths near the south gate were discovered, and though regular work was not commenced till 1890, in 1864 the search was renewed, and in the next two decades much was opened up. Now every

year a portion of the city is laid bare, its treasures sought out, and the plan carefully preserved before the soil is replaced, for even were the land not required for cultivation the remains are in no condition now to withstand the treacheries of English climate without some protection. Near by lies what probably was the public inn, whilst another, possibly an older, bathing establishment, is near the Basilica in what is known as Insula III, *i.e.* the third section of the city explored by the Silchester Excavation Association. This Basilica was declared by Dean Kitchen to be "the most precious relic of early Christian architecture now extant in the world." The Dean was an enthusiast, but even the latest writers do not controvert its claim to be one of the oldest known in Europe. Another record of very early Christianity, a rude monument with Ogam inscription, was discovered in Insula IX.

Perhaps the most picturesque corner of all, certainly on that spring day, was just below the east gate, where a rough path runs at the foot of the grand old wall of flint and slabs that rises above a grass-grown, crumbling bank. Between this foot-path and the lane a pond fills the hollow, and the water gleamed deep green and brown in the shadow of the encircling bushes, between which, in shimmering, fairy loveliness, chervil umbles made a flood of lightsomeness above upshooting green, where later on spires of foxglove would hang purple-belled. Within the space of a hundred yards or so was gathered Britain from the days of the Cæsars to our own, represented by the blue and white of an election poster that a passing bill-sticker had pasted on the sawn trunk of a huge fallen elm. *Absit omen!* The massive stone ruin that commemorates the greatness of an empire, a thing of the past even though buttressed so imperishably, and the stained and tattered poster as symbol of the present, impelled a prayer for imperial stability other than "on paper."

Inside the ancient wall a line of elms partly hides the church, which, some seven hundred years old at most, is a mere thing of yesterday by the grey wall that has challenged wind and weather for more than twice as many centuries. Only seven hundred! Elsewhere it would be venerable enough, and one would stay to wonder who originally lay under those worn stone coffin slabs, or whose hands carved the feathered angels on the Perpendicular chancel screen, who was the fair lady of

the effigy by the south wall—so we judge her from the long curl of hair that the stone has perpetuated better than her name—and what was the story of James Hore, the giver in 1659 of the painted canopy over the pulpit. But Roman Britain claims attention here, though the eastern gate of the city is now but an entrance to a farmyard, and the old wall serves no higher purpose than to mark the boundary of the barn-door cock's demesne, where he struts with his harem of hens pecking and scratching under the gnarled oak by the mossy ruin. White beam trees, with creamy corymbs of blossom and leaves lined with silver velvet, flourish by the ruins; knotted ivy stems, like gigantic veins, spread a network over the stones above the smooth, green herbage; and thick bushes now hide the five rows of seats that ring the grassed arena of the ruined amphitheatre outside the north-east corner of the wall. More distinct are the banks that mark the site of the forum in the centre of the city, a fine building once, to judge by discovered fragments of carved pillar and moulded capital,[1] when "the city in the woods" was civilisation's central station on the roads to the unquiet north and west from the settled districts of London and the south. Once the conquering eagle had been implanted on her outworks, trade more than war marked *Calleva*, though here Constantine assumed the imperial purple, and through these streets must have tramped the legions on their way to the wild warfare by the Wall. Now only bunnies man the ramparts. There they sit sentinel, ears erect, ready to bolt to their burrows at the first approaching footfall. Evidently they have had no South African war to educate them, for they watched on the skyline of the grass-grown mounds above the tangle of briars, clear against a band of liquid copper light that glowed under a ragged panoply of misty, grey cloud. Then a stone fell, and not a bunny of them all remained: they had taken cover with a celerity not centuries of being shot at could ever impart to Tommy. Yet, when the intruder waited silently by the gap, after a moment or so they returned to their gambols among the scattered flints that lie where the Roman once secured his southern luxuries in the heart of Belgic Britain. And so, while the birds sang their evening chorus to the persistent obbligato of the cuckoo, and the smoke of the

[1] The "finds" made during the excavating work are preserved at Strathfieldsaye and in Reading Museum, with plans and models.

fragrant weed floated in intertwining rings on the still air, we pondered on these ruins of lost greatness.

Long before the Christian era some wild warrior folk raised the massive earthworks that neither the change and wear of centuries, nor the passing of successive conquerors, has levelled to the ground. The dark forest of Anderida stretched from Sussex on to the westward Downs, but here it would seem ran a clearing, it may be a fastness in the woodland hacked out by the rude implements of prehistoric tribesmen; or fire, perchance, cut through the tangled primeval growth a path that exposed the clans in the upper valleys of the Loddon and Test to attacks from more barbarous neighbours to the north. Not a myth remains of the camp and trackway, by which the Roman city was raised, till after the legions won a way hither and ousted the Atrebates from their stronghold, unless it be there *were* giants in the land! Did the legendary Onion, once connected by the country people with a small gateway in the southern wall and even with the coins continually found in the vicinity, make lasting record of his existence and strength by flinging the Imp Stone, which still bears the impress of his gigantic clutch, to where some half mile northwestwards it marks the Berkshire border. But of this only the guide books speak, and history, unless we allow Camden to represent it, is sternly silent. Even with the coming of the Romans little enough is known, though Commius, the Atrebate who played traitor first to his own tribe and then to Cæsar, is allowed to have possibly held the stronghold against his erstwhile allies. True, Silchester stands to-day the best example of a Roman city in our land, because the most fully examined, but we have only a skeleton after all, articulated but not articulate. The history of even the Roman city is, almost, like Viola's, "A blank."

For a time after the Romans evacuated the island Silchester maintained its importance, and in the centuries of silence that stand between the buried city and the Early English church was time and enough for gradual decay. It appears to have been a bishopric of the British Church, and it is now supposed that here—

> ". . . Merlin thro' his craft
> And while the people clamour'd for a King
> Had Arthur crowned."

So if we have not Truth's "cold, unalterable marble" wherewith to fashion our figure of old Silchester we have golden legend enough; and perchance the glowing vapour of romance is truer record of bygone humanity than the completest statistics and most approved official histories would ever furnish.

The sunset faded to twilight, the ruins of the forum loomed vague as their story. From the village came an echo of young voices. It was a fête-day, and the treat had reached a finish, as must these musings. While "God Save the King" rang down the valley to mix with the music of the nightingales, we wended our way back by the old grey wall, and if doubt there were which century was with us, it was dispelled at sight of that fallen king of the elms prone by the roadway and blazoned with the legend:—

VOTE F R SAI LP

CHAPTER IX

THE CLERE COUNTRY

Would you lift the Veil, long fallen, on the Ages rolled away
And sealed as a Past Forgotten? Who knows but perchance ye may
If ye go as little children, and dream on the upland sward,
But they pass no doubting cynic where the gods keep watch and ward.

Prehistoric History.

THE sun hangs a jewel on every rain-washed leaf; on an apple-tree by the window, between spasmodic outbursts of his noisy cry, a cuckoo has just finished his morning toilet, a lengthy process, for he was a bit of a dandy and not easily satisfied with the set of his feathers, but with a final "cuck" and the soughk-soughk of strong wings he disappeared; the birds divide their attention between breakfast and their morning ditties—how different these from the evening notes, brisker, with a hurried chirpiness, for the business of the day is upon them, with preened feather and bill new rubbed they must bustle, bustle, bustle, else all early worms will be safely underground, and so there is no time for the lusty, full-throated carolling of eventide. This is the time to wander out on a May morning, when the bean blossoms load the fresh air with their fragrance, before the finger of jealous day has swept the dew from the cobwebs. And if these gravelled, grass-bordered byways of Hampshire with their wealth of flowers, their roadside ponds embedded in the lush grass, reeds, flags, and other water-loving plants under shadowing oak, elm, or willow, their turns and twists by hamlets and cottages, set in bowers of lilac and the golden rain of laburnum, give you not feast enough of sweet English scenery, for my part I know not where it may be bettered. True, Kent claims to be "the

garden of England"—it may be the kitchen garden, but Hampshire with her flower-filled lanes for parterre, her commons and woods for lawn and park (not even the Green Isle herself has richer emerald) is England's Flower Garden.

West of Pamber the character of the country changes, the lanes narrow and their surface is more liable to criticism, also there is less timber, though all this country once was a part of the great forest afore-mentioned that, when Silchester was at her zenith, lay like a wedge from the Anderida to the vale of the Kennet, and the lord of Pamber Manor, elected yearly by the assembled tenants, enjoyed hunting rights eastwards through the forest to Windsor. By the thirteenth century cultivation and grants for private enclosure had encroached on the forest lands, yet a portion remains to this day, and a happy hunting-ground for naturalists. In Tadley, a scattered parish on the west of Pamber Forest, the old rough race of foresters has not yet died out. So remote was the village that a good story is current of the reception met with by an aëronaut whose balloon descended in a cottager's garden hereabouts some half-century ago. The stranger had lost his bearings and begged for information. But the manner of his coming struck terror into the very soul of the Tadley man. Had he not with his mortal eyes beheld this astounding chariot descend from the high heavens? So he plumped on his knees and with hands uplifted in heartfelt anguish pleaded, "Oh! Lord Almighty, forgive us, this is God-forsaken Tadley"![1] Thus the last century found Tadley in the condition—or more so—of the county when in 1784 the chief subject worthy of note in all self-respecting diaries was the journey of a Mr. Blanchard in a "grand air balloon" across Surrey and Hants to Romsey.

From Tadley village a path through the fields, much to be recommended for an evening ramble, leads by pleasant ways to Kingsclere, or by a net-work of lanes the county border may be followed to Newtown. Our choice lies through the fields of deep red clover, rose-pink saint-foin and green young wheat, then by narrow lanes to the little church, built actually in the centre of the parish but away from everywhere. Thence you may wander down past Wyeford Farm, one of the oldest

[1] Another local version of the story is that the answer of the amazed Tadleyites who assembled to view the monster was, "God save us!—Tadley," and the village is still nicknamed God-save-us-Tadley.

buildings in the neighbourhood, once a moated manor, and, tradition whispers, connected to Pamber Priory by an underground passage from the vaulted cellars. North-west lies another old farmhouse, Tadley Place, a delightful picture with its timberwork, weathered tiles, bricks toned as only age can effect, and fine chimney stack, while beyond the fields and hazel copse, through which the path lies, Baughurst spire rises high above the trees. The church is modern, for the original Norman building partly collapsed some sixty years ago, but the fine oak screen, Archbishop Warham's gift, remains.

Go to Kingsclere, if you would follow another counsel of perfection, when the sun is setting, perchance in a flood of crimson below a dark curtain of cloud. The road from Basingstoke drops in a series of shallow steps to the wooded valley, and you may wait by a convenient stile to watch the clump of firs on the hill to the right more clearly silhouetted every moment against the glowing sky, while the sweep of the Downs deepens from blue to violet before they fade and merge into the mists rising to wrap the trees, that hide the little town from view until the last dip of the road shall bring you right into the main street as the big red ball drops below the horizon. Then pass on to the old grey church and, as you stand under the rounded Norman arch of the western doorway, see the glory die from the heavens, the primrose and green lights dull behind the swaying trees, and the evening star hang out night's signal above the looming dark of the Downs. You may get very far away from this twentieth century.

Even Norman times are comparatively recent in Kingsclere, for it was a royal manor under the Saxon kings, with charters and documents dating back to the eighth century. With the Norman line Kingsclere passed to ecclesiastical holding. The Conqueror, anxious to build his castle at Winchester, exchanged the parsonage lands for coveted grounds in that city owned by the monks of Hyde, and his son Henry gave the royal manor to the Canons of Rouen. During the French wars the Archbishop of Rouen handed it over to William de Melton—ever to be remembered as the builder of York Minster's grand west window. Bisham Priory, Godstone Nunnery, Sandleford Priory, and the College of St. Elizabeth in Winchester, at various times enjoyed grants of lands and tithes from this rich living, till, at the dissolution, it passed with the college to Wriothesley. Thus, briefly,

we can follow its fortunes, but the history of Kingsclere has yet to be fully set forth, and it will be worth the writing. What echoes of romance there are in the very names of its tythings—Edmondsthorpe Benham—was it originally a Norse settlement, a thorpe on King Edward's manor?—Clerewoodcot; Frollibury, now shortened to Frobury; Harrington Lances, the manor held by the Launcelene family; there are whispers of stories in every one, from forgotten ages to the days of knightly chivalry and derring-do; mills that stand to-day where mills stood before the Domesday Survey; common lands as ancient.

Kingsclere.

Though the market place has now no market there was one here when the Norman Conqueror held the manor and claimed a day's entertainment from the town; the streets are as irregular as only old streets with a patchwork of buildings can be, and the old inns bear names venerable in the story of inn signs; the carrier takes his leisurely way to the neighbouring towns, there is no shriek of passing trains to replace the vanished coach horn—the motor does its share certainly! You expect to hear the curfew ring from the low grey tower of the fine cruciform Norman church, and wandering

in the old chalk pit known as The Dell it takes but little imagination to blot out what there is of to-day—there is not much—and invest the old cottages and rustic inhabitants with the air and habiliments of their Norman forbears in the days when King John hunted over this country during his many visits to Freemantle, the Royal hunting box in the forest that covered the Downs to the south.

History tells how, in the spring of 1215, when staying in his "house which stands on a height, and in the heart of a forest," John was visited by Robert de Béthune and his Flemish knights, who came to offer their services against his rebellious barons. They had "joyous welcome" we read, and were dispatched with Salisbury to put down the rising in Devon; but at Sherborne the insurgents lay in ambush, whereat the valour of the Flanders volunteers vanished very speedily. "You are not good at taking fortresses," quoth John "scornfully when he heard the tale," and promptly ordered them back. No less than thirty-seven times did John stay at this hunting box which had had fairer inmate than the luckless King:—

> "Boures had the Rosamond about in Engelond,
> Which the King for her sake made ich understond.
> Waltham Bishops,—in Castle of Wynch,
> Atte park of Freemantle, atte Martelstow,
> Atte Woodstocke, and other places."[1]

and for the sake of Fair Rosamond Godstone Nunnery where, "when Passion's trance was overpast," the poor lady was buried, received the tything of Sandford as gift from her royal lover. Reginald Fitzherbert was granted Freemantle Manor by Edward I, and as the years passed the hunting box disappeared, till now its very site is almost a matter of speculation, though some of the rough mounds and hillocks hereabouts hide the crumbling foundations, and the plover may lay her speckled eggs where the royal gourmand once feasted. A long grassed trough is pointed out as the original fish pond of the manor. By a curious irony this demesne, where so many kings gat sport and pleasure, was given by Parliament to the regicide President Bradshaw when, as part of the lands of Lord Cottington, it was sequestered during the Civil War.

[1] Hearne, Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*.

A foot-track leads straight over from the Dell, or a rough lane more deviously, with views that compensate for the shortcomings of its surface, cornfields on either side, sheep on the gorse-dotted slope beyond, peewits whauping over the red fallow, and a beautiful broken line of Downs stretching west. By Plantation Farm, at the top of the hill, the lane forks east to Ewhurst, or south to Hannington, a pretty village with small thatched cottages and a roofed well by the village pond, close to the ancient church that has Norman work in its fabric. It stands on a spur of the Downs well above the country to south-east and south, and there are fine views of blue-grey distances, swelling hill and dale, and much woodland. The Hannington children still keep up Pancake-day, Shrove Tuesday: they start out in the early morning and go round to all the farms and houses, begging for pennies or cake, before the school-bell summons them to more up-to-date occupation! The custom used to be general hereabouts, but only survives now in one or two quiet corners, and the children had a regular chant:—

"Knick-knock, the pan's hot,
And we are come a shroving,
For a piece of pancake,
Or a piece of bacon,
Or a piece of truckle-cheese
Of your own making."

In the lane that runs east to Ibworth thorns and flints lie openly threatening to work havoc with pneumatic tyres, but it is a charming walk. Tiny wrens, like big and swollen brown moths, flit through the hedges, the larks sing unceasing, the yellow-hammer's gay feathers are as obtrusive as his persistent note, and the flower-lover may gather a very varied posy, as the hardier flowers of the chalk uplands give place to the beauties of hedgerow and copse, such as the delicate water avens and Solomon's Seal, with its pendant bells of greeny-white. This plant used to be in great request, for "stamped while it is fresh and greene" it took away, according to "laborious Gerarde," as Isaac Walton called the old herbalist, "in one night or two at the most, any bruise, blacke or blue spots gotten by falls, or women's wilfulness, in stumbling upon their hasty husband's fists," and was "excellent good to heale or close up greene wounds." Even fifty years ago a local leech and herbalist went the round of these villages. He enjoyed

a great repute among the country folk as a healer, and sold the rural beauties a soap containing a decoction from this herb, as an infallible remedy for freckles and sunburn. Ibworth, like its neighbour, Upper Wootton, enjoys a fine bracing situation, delightful in June when a fresh breeze blows softly from the distant Downs that stretch away beyond the river valleys to Winchester, and on again to Sussex. The south wind, the villagers will tell you, on a clear day carries up the clean salt smell of the sea. But in winter it is bitter cold on these exposed highlands. Even within the last few years, none very severe, cottagers have been snowed up, and when deep snows fall there is often sore distress. The narrow lanes are blocked, and woe betide the stray sheep or the stranger who wanders amid these trackless spaces where the golden plover whistles drearily, for here we are on the very edge of the High Downs, and soothly even old Montaigne would have been satisfied that he was "far from all manner of filthy, foggy, ill-savouring and unwholesome airs." Surely if man would but come to the health-giving lap of green Mother Earth, and surrender to her influences, the years piled on by strife in toiling cities must slip away, and a St. Martin's summer of youth await even the most world-weary in the remoteness of these peaceful silences.

Yet the Downs are never silent; no place so teeming with life could be. There is sound everywhere. Dogs and cattle add their quotha to the impatient call of lambs and anxious cry of answering ewes, the liquid tinkle of sheep bells, cooing of pigeons in the beeches, peewits mightily perturbed at any comer, and circling round with their petulant wail; through the clear air overhead the larks' songs ripple; the hum of the insect world pulses over the sunswept spaces with their myriad flowers; and blent with the song and the warfare of wild life comes a hollow echo of guns from Aldershot or Salisbury Plain, the rumble of distant trains rattling through the valley-lands, murmurs of the busy life of man pitting his puny strength of a day against eternal forces. Hark! How the old Downs mock us, with kindly, pitying mockery! . . .

Oh! ye mortals of a day, behold *us*, remote, solid, immoveable. We have been and—we are. Yet we, too, knew the pangs of birth when the parting waters swirled away, and graved our sides while the sun scorched their nakedness; till

the ages rolled on and the forests crept about our feet, and the rains we gathered sank and sprang forth again to cut fresh channels and spread a verdant carpet in the grooves. But, through all, we, the Downs, remain, and lift our rounded bosoms to the sun's caress or the buffet of the winter's blizzard. Away in the plains the business of the world circles; on our stretching flanks the fruits of the earth grow, ripen, and are garnered in due season; flock succeeds flock on our wolds; even the beeches that hang from our crests die and moulder down to their self-spread russet winding-sheets; Man in the villages and hamlets, that shelter in our dells and copses, lives his life, goes out, and others come. We, the Downs, have seen it. We have watched their passing. We remain. Here dwelt the men of the impenetrable ages, our sides are yet pitted with the holes where they mined for flints to chip into their rude instruments, and their graves are the grass-grown barrows that pimple our surface. Then came the Celt and furrowed our brows with his earthworks, and left deep seams on our flanks, or ever the Roman drove his uncompromising roads straight through the forests to our fastnesses. All passed, leaving only turf-covered hillocks, crumbling ruins, and the scars on our sides. You, Man the Destroyer, go; but we, the Downs, remain. . . .

He was not so very different from us after all, that old Roman, we are both Man the Destroyer, for we scar the landscape with cuttings for our fire-carriages—not half so picturesque as the war-chariots of our ancestors doubtless!—and insult the blue vault of the sky with networks of telegraph lines and, crowning injury, the dastardly outrage of advertising posters. But, thank Heavens! Z's soap does not yet flaunt its merits in footlong letters from Beacon Hill, and the elves may dance in the fairy rings undismayed by sight of a glaring announcement that they should take A's pills. If any doubt that there be elves let them go peep into a fold of the Downs below the training-ground where Porter's horses have their daily gallop, and mark how the floor of the tiny vale has a mosaic of rings as regular as though planned out with rule and compass for fairies to race and dance in; then ask the old shepherd by the sheep-fold on the down beyond. He will stay night after night with his dog and black-faced sheep amid the illimitable solitudes of these hilltops, with no light but the

cold glimmer from the stars, yet not for a fortune would he spend an hour of darkness alone in his red-tiled cottage a mile off down the vale! But there is always some light under the free heavens, and there is lightning every night but on Old Christmas Eve when the cattle—who have not yet learnt to reckon new style—still kneel down. Much more he can, an he will, which is to say the least exceeding doubtful, tell you, and of his own knowledge and experience relate as much about witches and fairy folk as you might hear at a twelvemonth of meetings in Albemarle Street!

The old Port Way ran from Silchester through Freemantle Park and Forest to St. Mary Bourne, and on by Andover to Sarum; now a long narrow plantation of firs, known as Cæsar's Belt, marks the line to the south of Cannon Heath, where in the seventeenth century the dukes of Bolton had a hunting lodge. The name by-the-bye is from the old owners of the manor, the Canons of Rouen, and not out of compliment to the famous jockey who has steered to victory many a horse trained on the close springy turf of its sweeping ridges. Every morning you may see the string of horses sedately pacing the road that passes Cannon Park Lodge up to White Hill.

The country to the north of Kingsclere is totally different from the Downs to the south, quiet, homely scenery, farms and fields and shady lanes. It is like that around Silchester, a country for leisurely saunterings, or its beauties are at best but half seen; well kept coverts, lanes in which to gather wild flowers, and fair meadow-land with most law-abiding cattle, unless their looks belie them; cottages with tile and thatch, gabled farms, and bonneted walls round rick-yard and garden. There are ingle nooks, old oak stairways and panelling for the seeking, despite the encroachment of modern ranges, paint and cheap papers. The country folk will give the passing stranger kindly "good mornin'," and round-eyed children shyly drop a curtsey. Pleasant manners, the pleasanter in that like many good old fashions they be sadly conspicuous by reason of their rarity in these days of Jack's-as-good-as-his-Master pratings; theories which certainly make for worse manners and, by the standard of the old Wykehamist motto, worse men.

Once in the course of a walking tour through the north-west of the county I spent a Sunday rambling round the lanes between Kingsclere and Newbury. It was a good day to have

chosen, for one met all the country-side at leisure, and in the conscious serenity of Sunday attire. In the winding lanes by Plastow Green wandered an old farmer, smoking contemplatively. He gave a friendly nod and "Mornin'," adding, "nice day." We drifted vaguely to a stile, and then, leisurely as the cumulus clouds trailed their soft creamy masses over the round blue roof of the May-day, between whiffs of his pipe came his comments on things in general.

It was very quiet, yes, "for the folks be all a' church." He didn't go. No. The church was very right and proper no doubt, he wasn't wishful anyways to say a word against it, but, for himself, he thought the green meads and blue sky all the church a man need have to pray in to the God Who made them. By no means an original heterodoxy and one hard to withstand in any case, impossible for a grey-flannelled tourist caught tramping by the roadside. But perhaps the pipe had some concern in the adjustment of his religious view! Then he discoursed on farming, told which of the neighbouring farms were better worked or had richer soil and fuller water supply than others; "vegetables," he did not differentiate, flourished more on the light soil of the Downs than the stiffer soil of the vale; yes, on the chalklands the soil was very light, some six inches for the most part and not more than four on the Downs, but the top, if light and thin, was very rich, and the pasture grew richer, for sheep were good for the land. It was a fine dairy country and Shorthorns and Alderneys did well; wages were low, but prices ruled low also. He was conservative in his notions, did not hold with any new fangled ways and misdoubted machinery, no mechanism could get "coutch"[1] off the land like women's fingers "nor never will." He discussed the prospects of the hay crop, shook his head over the results of the lambing season, and in conclusion argued the rival merits of Basingstoke market, which I knew, and Newbury, which I did not, and therefore was in no position to contradict the assertion that folks could, and did, turn a tidy penny by buying at one and selling next day at the other, as prices fluctuated, the higher prices obtaining in the Hampshire town, though I had seen in an eighteenth-century

[1] The dried grass and weeds pulled up by the harrow which would grow again if left.

account-book a note to the effect that Newbury market was cheaper than Devizes.

Further on an ancient grandsire, more garrulous than comprehensible, favoured me with a long disquisition on the degeneracy of the age, and shook his hoary head as he bemoaned Kingsclere Fair and other vanished glories of bygone days. To my mind there was no question that his freshly-starched smock-frock, "round-frock" or "surplice" in Hampshire parlance, was infinitely more desirable than his grandson's shiny black, and gaudy satin tie! He favoured me with minute directions how to reach Kingsclere without going round by the road: "You keeps ailong ther me-add aifter you'm been droo' where ther folks ha' made a ho-ole in ther 'ood," but confessed he'd not been that way for years. Nor had anyone else, seemingly! This was near Ecchinswell, whither I came from Headley Common, pretty Newtown and the valley of the Embourne, by charming lanes where blue and bronze dragon-flies whisked over the flower-laden hedge-banks and skimmed lightly away among the rushes and rose-pink masses of ragged-robin, by streamlet, pond and copse. A tangle of wood and meadow-land ran up each fold of the Downs, with an unusual amount of water everywhere. The village, indeed, owes its name to the many springs.

My quest had been the Newbury battlefield, but that is Berkshire's story even if it did directly affect the fortunes of Basing House. Kingsclere was not without its share of alarms in the days of the Rebellion. Charles stayed here on the eve of battle, and the Royal army concentrated on the town in October with a view to the relief of the beleaguered garrison, but the strength of the enemy's horse led to the selection of a less exposed position over the border. There were skirmishes too in and around, when some of the gallants from loyal Donnington raided abroad for provender or beat up the quarters of the enemy to slay and harry. Earlstone Manor House was the scene of one such affair, when the Kentish Regiment suffered severely at the hands of some of Boys' daring Cavaliers. Earlstone lies east of Ecchinswell, and the old Jacobean manor is famous for its fine carved mantelpiece. The Beconshaws of Earlstone fought for the King, but one daughter of the house, Alicia, was wife of the regicide John Lisle.

A narrow lane, that soon becomes a delightfully grassy track,

leads by a fine irregular avenue of fir and beech up to the shoulder of Ladle Hill, and by a winding trackway to the earthworks and tumuli that mark this age-old fortress of forgotten peoples.[1] A line of beeches runs for more than a mile round the ridge to where another lane leads down again to Sydmonton and round to Kingsclere, and at the corner is a view of moulded curves and grassy undulations, with trees nestling in the broken terraces, that is a dream long to be remembered when seen before the white beauty of the hawthorn blossom has vanished, when purple shadows sweep over vale and hillside, and the sunlight breaking from the fleeting clouds dapples the chalky fields in the valley with mauve and pink and violet, while the fresh green of the overhead beeches frames the faint blue of the distant horizon. But from the western corner the view is very diverse. Southward roll the downlands, tree-dotted, irregular, to Great Litchfield Down, and here indeed we get—

> An echo of the warfare that surged in valley passes,
> A whisper of the life-blood that reddened all the grasses.

Great Litchfield, the field of the dead, where in the veiled past warriors whose very race can be but dimly guessed at were "put to sleep with swords"; polished celts, or—who shall say when first the tide of battle rolled hitherward?—rougher chipped flints, fearsome weapons; for three hundred feet below, in the valley that cuts through the chalk barrier between Ladle and Beacon Hills, in those unfathomable ages man here met man and struggled for mastery of the road to north or south. Look at the earthworks behind, climb up Beacon Hill to the grassed mounds that were the hut circles and protecting ditches and embankments of that City of Refuge of our Celtic forbears. Ah! the old folk tales are true, there must have been giants in the land to leave such imperishable monuments of days when men "drunk delight of battle" and foe met foe face to face. Wrath fronted wrath and kindled fury in the fronting, nor waited prone on the distant hillside in a hades of noise for a winged death to find him sending his message hurtling back at an unseen foe! They had their day, and we have no use for them

[1] At the Domesday Survey the freemen of Burghclere held their lands on condition of keeping the local defences in order.

in ours. A giant in warfare of mathematics and arms of precision would but be the better target for every sharpshooter, and fall in the first skirmish as surely as Goliath before David! Also the man of science with his tabulated measurements of bones and skulls will have it there were no giants. Yet, as we have no record of the primeval fights, we can picture the strife as we please till we come to later struggles, Celt against Celt, Briton against Roman, Romano-Briton against Saxon, and touch history at last. Litchfield village hides in the valley to the south—there is some of the old Norman building in its restored church, and the very broken remains of an ancient font, besides the record of a toll gathered here, to mark that the route was still of importance in Domesday times; but the chief interest in the valley is the group of tumuli known as Seven Barrows. The burnt bones and charcoal found there give an approximate date, flints and a bronze pin are further evidence for the learned; but for the uninitiated what are a few centuries or so when one deals with ages? *Round barrows of the old round-headed Celts* is more generally intelligible than pratings of brachycephalic man of the Bronze age!

Beacon Hill with Sidown's tree-crowned crest beyond make a picture from every point of view. They are landmarks half-across the county. On the northern slope of Sidown stands the finely situated Castle of Highclere in its beautiful park. Kingsley has sung its praises, and many another pen described the grounds, the artificial lakes, the art treasures, and the histories of this home of the Herberts, Earls of Carnarvon.

A name that is always remembered in connection with Highclere is Richard Pococke's, Bishop of Meath, and grandson of Isaac Milles, the Highclere rector who brought a cedar cone from Lebanon, and planted it in the park; but curiously enough the connection of the locality with a brilliant contemporary of the reverend Doctor's is seldom mentioned. This is the more strange in that Mrs. Montagu, the Queen of the Bluestockings, lies by her husband and only child in Hampshire's Cathedral, and their favourite country home, though actually on Berkshire soil, is but separated from Hants by that little boundary stream the Emborne. Sandleford Priory, moreover, was one of the religious houses on which the Kingsclere tithes were bestowed. Many of the witty lady's sprightly letters were penned from here, and contain frequent

reference to places and people in the neighbourhood. The Herberts of Highclere and the Pococke family are often mentioned. The old rector is described as "a very learned man," and his daughter, the widow of Richard Pococke, master of the Grammar School at Southampton, where their son was born, is "Phœbus in petticoats":—

"an ancient gentlewoman skilled in Latin, dipped in Greek and absorbed in Hebrew, besides a modern gift of tongues. By this learned person's instruction was Dr. Pococke (her son) skilled in antique lore while other people are learning to spell monosyllables . . . His gingerbread was marked with Greek characters, and his bread and butter instead of glass windows was printed with Arabick, he had a mummy for his jointed baby, and a little pyramid for his playhouse."

Afterwards the two ladies met, and corresponded with every sign of mutual liking, a regard evidently not extended to Miss Pococke; "such a low-bred, narrow-spirited woman," Dean Lyttleton wrote to Mrs. Montagu, that she "would disgrace an episcopal house." The highly classical education on which her brother throve, appears to have had unhappy results for the sister!

To appreciate Highclere one should not come by the path of the Downs, but alight from a railway train and drive from Woodhay Station up the gravel road, by the fine timber, and through the large village of trim villas in a station cab! Wild spaces and dreams of primitive fighting men accord but ill with orderly parterres and velvet lawns, and in this country along the Berkshire border we find again a modern England we all know, and some of us do not care about, the England of "desirable residences within easy reach of the railway station," and "on gravel soil," not forgetting "with fine views"; and the sport is the "sport" of syndicates. But as the railway line is left behind the country grows wilder, and the Downs are again approached; the rough lanes twine and tumble in and over the spurs and valleys that run up to the dominating heights of Walbury and Inkpen. On one such rise stands the church of East Woodhay, well above that village. The grey, ivy-covered stones in the graveyard look venerable enough, but the church, as a tablet on the tower announces, was rebuilt in 1823, and the only possible word in its favour is that the brick of which it is partly composed gives a touch of colour among the elms of the litten, where the rooks caw evident dis-

approval of the water-wheel that protrudes itself within a few feet of the tower. But if the church belongs to the genteel age of architecture, the yew by the rectory is said to have been planted by Bishop Ken, when that old friend of Rector Isaac Milles held the living.

A chapelry of East Woodhay lay on the further slope of the Downs that rise to the south and west, and wild, indeed, are the old tracks leading to it. But here, in view of the mighty fastnesses of the chalk ranges this chapter may fitly close, for to describe them were to attempt to voice the inexpressible. Time only shall disclose the details wrapt in mist when, hazy and dim as the future, they loom grey on the horizon in the morning, and generations yet unborn peep from their veiled mysteries and beckon the dreamer on; but at high noon they stand out clear-cut in imperturbable strength, not rough, but gentle as all true strongness ever is; and with evening the mighty hosts of the dead draw one back down the centuries for the eternal beginning, not of an end but of an infinite chain. Did the wild Belgic clans take Hertha for their divinity? Come, while the hours complete but one cycle of night and day, and commune alone with these untouched spaces, with mind swept clear of formulæ and dogma: you will answer that question without need to search your Tacitus for information once you have listened to the tale those hoary wolds drone in deep booming voices, height answering height across the tinkling music of their valleys. But mortal tongue nor pen may not compass even a whisper of that infinite singing.

CHAPTER X

BYWAYS OF THE NORTH-WEST.

WHAT will ever remain one of Hampshire's greatest charms to me is her wonderful variety. You never know what next she may give you, what the coming turn in the road, or even without a turn what the next rising or falling gradient will discover—for here, again, she will be bound by no rule, and if some lanes zigzag, as though they could not linger enough between the hedges, many go straight as the path of arrow or bullet to its mark; hence, as length is mainly suggested by monotony, some of her roads make false the old proverb about lanes with no turnings. And it is partly because of this infinite changefulness that, to me, Hampshire is always a woman. She has all the womanly attributes. To go by her villages and hamlets is to wander through an idyll to which no foreign country can show parallel, an idyll that is woman's own, an idyll of home. A vigil on her rounded Downs is a vision with dim vistas of the far away mother of our race, the Earth Mother that bare us, and gathers her tired children back to her bosom to rest till the next awakening. She is sweet, sincere, and open—and yet with hidden secrets in her apparently most open spaces: she will show you, it seems, her very heart laid out before you in the clear light of noon, only for you to find when you venture in that you had seen nothing, nor knew aught at all about it! Would you have practical demonstration of these theorisings climb to the top of Sidown Hill on a clear day, and note that though you get wood and vale, cornlands, moor, and far-reaching distances, there is never a glint of water, and only the wealth of vegetation betrays that somewhere in those deep combes and hollows lie unseen fountains.

Her springs, her very rivers, are not disclosed; so, if you judged her hastily without closer search you would be as ignorant of her true character as if you judged a beautiful woman on a single day's acquaintance—more so, for you might gauge the limits of the one, you would certainly achieve but little knowledge of the other.

Sidown rises abruptly, 300 feet and more in a mile, to the south of Highclere, so, though the road is a good one, the gradients are decidedly stiff, and the high road to Hurstbourne Tarrant and Andover is plentifully decorated with danger boards. But once I cycled up from Whitchurch by Woodcott and Crux Easton, and though the lanes may be rough the rise is more gradual; any way, for my part, the Three Legged Cross at the top of the range was gained without undue distress. By this inn, certainly the highest in Hampshire, one of the oldest of British trackways crosses the modern road; to the west it continues along the crest of the ridge to the mighty earthworks known as Walbury Ring, and so passes over to Berkshire. It is the narrowest of lanes, and best explored on foot, for though negotiable for wheels to start with, it develops on Sidown into a wild wood-track, and then winds steeply down, a mere footpath, to the grassy sweeps by Seven Barrows. The wood is the most surprising feature, for here you are on one of the highest points in Hampshire, within a hundred feet or so of our British big timber limit, and instead of bleak uplands you might, standing back under the beeches, be in a glade of the New Forest. But pass on to where the path leads down over the short dry grass, and you must be hard to please if the variety of scene spread out below does not satisfy. Countless hills and downs as far as the eye can reach in every direction, interlacing, intersecting, upstanding, solitary like Beacon Hill to the east, or in long stretching lines as Ladle Hill beyond it, and no two alike in any particular, save the all pervading one of beauty. Most beautiful should you chance on a lucky hour, when Sol in his endless battle with the clouds achieves victory for awhile, and drives the routed enemy away. On such a day came the writer. Clouds hid all the distance at starting, but before long they parted, rifts of blue spread between the pearly grey, and long bands of silver streamed over the valleys, whirled into wisps, and vanished as the picture slowly unrolled; ridge by ridge swept southwards, grey, brown and blue,

cut by rough hedgerow and with a chequer of cornfields and fleeting shadows on their flanks; grassy downs fell away with scattered gorse brakes, and here and there a clump of firs, a beech copse, a tiny spinney almost hid in a fold; on and on ridge and hill, widespread field or conical hilltop to the Wiltshire Downs, pale ghosts beyond Hurstbourne Hill. Then, as the sun played over the folds and crevasses of their moulded spurs, what looked unbroken slope in grey shadow became seamed and rutted with green hillocks or purple hollows, as a scudding cloud let the sunbeams chase up the path of the wind, soft soughing from the sea, away there beyond where dim blue of hill met dim blue of heaven. A land of mystery and, therefore, charm.

But turn back and note the contrast offered on the other side where the wooded northern flank of Sidown's great chalk rampart falls to the Upper Greensand of the London Basin. No mystery of cloud and shadow on interlacing valley and hill, but a broad plain reaching away to the haze on the northern horizon; a rich land doubtless, shaded by dark woodland, and serried ranks of elms set between golden acres of corn, but in comparison with the broken lands to the south flat as though passed through a mangle!

The two villages afore-mentioned lie, as was inferred, off the highway. The huge decrepit yew at Woodcott, with a very city of birds' nests among its gnarled and twisted limbs that iron bindings scarce keep erect, makes its restored church look, in comparison, not even a thing of yesterday but an affair of this morning. From a stile under the beech clump beyond one gets a peep over the thick woods of Easton Park to the hills that cut the Bourne valley from the upper waters of the Anton. Grotto Copse, by the way, alongside the old road on Sidown, is all that remains to commemorate by its name the once—

> ". . . radiant pile nine rural sisters raise;
> The glittering emblem of each spotless dame:
> Pure as her soul and shining as her fame:—"

Yet fame might have passed with its perished symbol, but for the lines penned by the erstwhile student at Twyford, Alexander Pope. Edward Lisle, of Crux Easton, nephew of the regicide, and father of the rural nine—tradition adds of eleven others

also—was a friend of the poet's, and himself ventured into literature's thorny paths, and left future generations his *Observations on Agriculture.*

The highway runs to the west, with a drop nearly as steep on the south as that on the north of Sidown, a level half-mile, and then a sudden scoop and steep pitch up Doiley Hill as it crosses a narrow valley, that threads between what remains of Doiley and Sidley Woods and winds north to where the new boundary line cuts into Pilot Hill. This is now the highest point in north Hants, two feet above Sidown's 872, and only topped in Hampshire by grim Butser in the south. The view from the road looking up the valley is picture as characteristic as artist's pencil could well depict. On the hill to the east above Sidley Wood is Ashmansworth, and were it only for its quaintness it would be worth while to find one's way up the narrow lanes to the old church. The direct road over the ridge from its mother parish—it was a chapelry of East Woodhay—is certainly none of the best, but the village lies not a mile from the main road at Three Legged Cross, and straggles down to the little church, that might easily be mistaken for an outlying building of the Church Farm alongside but for its belfry, and tiny graveyard. Actually it is not among the oldest of Hampshire churches, dating, it is said, no further back than the twelfth century, though it probably stands on the site of an older building, for Athelstan gave the manor to the Winchester See in the tenth century. So Saxon workmen may first have brought the materials from Silchester, that great quarry for north Hampshire—ay, and for Berks. also—which would account for the traces of Roman work noted as yet existent in the fabric: but whether or no, I can recall no other church in the county that gives a greater impression of agedness, and there are few unvisited by me, certes not one with any claim to antiquity. Two large bricks in the porch bear testimony to renovations in "1694," for outside the walls are of every age, a patchwork worn and stained through decades of changing seasons, and by the buffets of the wild winds that sweep unchecked over the Downs. But inside the building has so primitive an air one passes at a step back through the centuries, for there, despite the pathetic contrast of matchboard dado and black-patterned red felt, venerable in their very decay stand the old walls, with their decorative frescoes yet discern-

able, and the worn and twisted beams of a roof that has weathered six centuries at least. The carved bosses and worm-eaten moulded beams were long said to have come from the Cathedral, but this is now denied, though their antiquity is unquestioned. Over the plain Norman arch—there is but the one to the chancel, and it is bowed with its weight of years—can be traced the old designs, and one is noteworthy, for it is said to be the only representation of the Pentecost in an English mural painting.

From Doiley Hill the road winds down to Hurstbourne Tarrant in the valley of the Bourne, but the best view of that quaint village is to be had from the steep—dangerously steep—hill on the southern side of the valley. Its crest is easier reached from Andover than from Hurstbourne. With a sudden bold sweep the land drops down in curves, that as the crops ripen range from green to bronze, set between long lines of dark hedgerow and, true Hampshire, a clustering mass of beeches on the brow of the hill where Doles Wood sweeps over. From just below where the road crosses the ridge the greys and browns of the village roofs in the hollow of the valley show under filmy smoke-drifts between the trees, and beyond rise the bold buttresses of Sidown, the culminating point of all the sweeping lines. Seen from here it stands majestic, king of the Downland, for Inkpen, the true monarch, lies too far back in Berkshire to overshadow Sidown's kingdom. Even further westwards, by Tangley Clumps, where you may see a fuller range of the chalk hills, Sidown holds its own, though in the same picture with neighbour Inkpen.

The valley road winds along between the sloping foothills of Hurstbourne Hill and an outlying buttress of the Downs that runs up to Linkenholt. Ibthrope—which has surely not changed since Jane Austen stayed there with her friends the Lloyds—lies in the hollow, about half a mile from Hurstbourne Tarrant, and has even more picturesque old houses to delight the lover of half timber, brick nogging, thatch, overhanging upper story, and brick and tile toned to a wonder of rich reds and russets. Some stand back on to the roadway, some in garden plots, and when the dahlias bend and sway with the weight of their gay blossoms between the dark clipped yews, and the scent from fragrant flower beds is borne on the fresh breeze that flirts the long trails of crimsoning creepers,

one is fain to declare that here at last must be the most favoured corner, till another turn takes one on to an entirely different, but equally alluring, spot. In fact, pages might be filled trying to picture all the sweet surprises, the nooks and corners, hills and dales of this out-of-the-way, old-world country, and filled vainly. For no medium at man's command can do more than suggest the charm of these folds in the grassy, copse-dotted downland. No two hundred yards of the road are the same, Nature, and man also, here seems as incapable of monotonous reproduction as the Japanese of old —modern methods appear to be stereotyping even their work to-day! Now the road passes between fields that slope up to the wooded tops of hills, but at the next corner its white line cuts the close turf of an open bit of common, with tufts of purpling heather and grey patches of chalky outcrop; then a narrow cleft on the hillside shadows a green lane running criss-crosswise to another byway from a main road. Cottage walls beneath old brown tiles glow roseate with Virginia creeper, or their plastered sides and the square walled farm enclosures are colour-washed in pink, or blue, or creamy yellow; others again nestle in hollows, with dormer windows, gable roofs, or are more than half smothered under sloping brown thatch, so demure, and set gaily in trim gardens, in which mignonette yields its rare fragrance under the September sun by lingering roses when Summer is loth to depart, even though Autumn has seized the woods and hedgerows and strips them of the gold she has but just now lavished on their leaves.

Beyond Vernham's Dean the road at the boundary divides, winding south-west into Wiltshire or to join the road up Conholt Hill, and from afar you may see it like a yellow snake, trailing over the green hillside to Chute Causeway and the high bleak Downs: but to the north it continues awhile longer in Hants, running below Oakhill Wood till within half-a-mile of Fosbury village it too crosses the county border. A rough track, however, leads back to the Vernhams between wild hedges, laden with nuts and berries in their season, by a plantation noticeably full of wild cherry trees—worth remembering for a visit in spring time when their frail white beauty shows fairy-like against the green needles of surrounding firs, whose gloom cannot dull the rich autumn carmine of the narrow cherry leaves. Twisting to the left at the cross-

roads, and again beyond, through a maze of lanes, you may run up to the ridge of hills where Hampshire's north and west boundaries meet Wiltshire and Berks., and, before turning back where the road dips down into Wilts., linger to watch the play of cloud shadows over Rivar Hill, and the graceful sweep of down and woodland round to Tidcombe's crest. Wildly beautiful this upland country, but most solitary—there is a loneliness in the very names, Moordown, Ruckmoor, Sheepless Hill—and soothly you may go far along the narrow, flint-strewn roads, over the hill paths and track ways, with no company but the birds and the butterflies; unless you take one of the lanes trending southwards to where the cottages of Vernham's Street lie along the twisty roadway for a mile or more to the trim graveyard with its small grey and brown church, rebuilt, but with Norman mouldings, and fine carved capitals, preserved on the slender shafts of the pillars supporting the arch of the western door.

When you get there—all the roads are a choice of evils—there is not much of Linkenholt, and what there is looks surprisingly new. And yet that such air and such a prospect should attract the modern builder is no reason for surprise. If still remote from railways the motor, as the writer can testify, may penetrate even the rough lanes that lead to these secluded valleys, and negotiate the steep gradients of these hills; and the view from Linkenholt will repay some trouble in the seeking, for the upper valley of the Bourne lies below, with the Hurstbourne ridge for south-west barrier rising to Tangley Clumps, with its staunch, rough firs where once the raven nested, and on to Conholt Hill which dominates the head of the vale by Oakhill Wood, massing the slope below Fosbury Camp. But fine though this be, within a stone's throw is prospect finer yet, for over the brow of the hill to the north the fields drop to a narrow valley that winds up to Combe Wood on the west, and shelves away east and south to Netherton. With so sheer and wide a scoop does the grassy slope break away by the small beech clump just below the crest of the hill, that a chalk flint kicked off the road would fall a-top of the row of ash trees bordering the cart-track at its feet, which look like toys set below one. A farmyard with red-roofed barn, and the cluster of yellow-brown ricks, have surely dropped from a play-box on to the sweeping shoulder beyond, that can

be nothing but a giant's sand-castle, so vast and round its contours; and the creaky whispers that come faintly from those slanting stripes, one shade redder than its yellow sides, are never the crank of real machinery turning up the fallow, but the jingling of midget ploughs with fleas for horses and mites for men! There we have it! 'Tis we are the mites, the infinitesimal atoms amid the majesty of the hills, and majestic the Downs here are. Above, beyond a green line of roots among the brown seams, rises Walbury, awesomely impassive, circled irregularly with rough hedgerows, scarred here and there with white chalk patches among the furze and broom, and crowned with a dark ring of prehistoric earthworks.

Hidden in the very heart of the Downs lies Combe, once the site of an alien religious house, Oakham Priory, a cell of the Abbey of Bec. The church and traces of ruined wall remain, dating from the thirteenth century, though some old stonework suggests a previous building. The present church was partly rebuilt in 1652, so saith the date in the brick and flint porch, and has been recently restored, but an old font and its unique chancel arch, cut in the solid block chalk, are untouched, and there are bits of old oak carving. Fifty years ago there was only an auctioneer's desk, below which sat the clerk. And hereby a tale Combe claims to have originated, but the right of possession is disputed, nor is it unknown to many who would be hard put to if asked to identify this remote village! For many years, they say, it was the custom not to commence the service till the squire and his family were seated in their chancel pew, to which they entered by a private door, but on one occasion a stranger took the service and unaware of any necessity for delay began, "When the wicked man——" at which critical point the deaf old clerk—why are they always deaf?—interrupted with a loud aside, "Please sir, he's not come in yet"! The door ever after was known as "the wicked man's." The old stone steps under matted grass and nettles still lead from the wilderness of a garden up to the churchyard and the path to the chancel entrance.

Tell an inhabitant of Combe that his village is in Berkshire and, despite the confirmatory evidence of an Ordnance Map, he will treat you with, at best, kindly pity for your ignorant folly. Combe is Hampshire. Combe always has

been and always must be Hampshire. True, owing to the difficulty of getting over bad roads to Andover, it was decided that Hungerford, about half as far away by a better road, would be a more convenient centre for rating purposes, and so the village was transferred to that Union; but this trifle does not make it Berkshire! Finally, after many other reasons, incontrovertible fact, did not the free and independent voters of Combe at the General Election in 1906 repair to Andover to register their votes, while the latest survey is dated 1882—"Revised in 1901 and published by Colonel Duncan A. Johnston, R.E., Director General, 1903"? Combe is Hampshire. The Ordnance is wrong, the Sapper Colonel misinformed, that is all!

And certainly Combe is far more akin to Hampshire's wild spaces and age-old charm than the country within her lawful boundary that lies to the north-east of Walbury and Pilot Hill. That cottage, half-timber, with its herring-bone brick work, bearing date 1687 under its thatch, have we not seen its counterparts and contemporaries all the way up from Itchen's mouth? And the thatch, what has it in common with the suburban smartness of red-tiled Highclere villas? But the same heavy thatch was at Swaythling and Hursley, among the Winchester Downs, on the cluster of tiny houses at Weeke, now, alas! but a memory, from end to end, in fact, of our Hampshire. So, for our part, we would gladly relinquish the prosperous country by the railroad in favour of this forgotten corner with its by-gone air and varied memories. Who, to see it now, would guess that these narrow lanes once echoed with the laughing clatter of a Court cavalcade when England's Merry Monarch made holiday at the Manor House, built on the site of the Priory which had given shelter to pious ladies and studious youth? Yet here, an tales be true, came Charles with his Nelly for seventeenth-century week-ends! There, by the wall that divides the wilderness of garden from the churchyard, is an old summer-house where they have sat. At first sight the house is of that hopeless type we find in deserted suburbs that were fashionable fifty years ago, for in the last century a misguided owner removed the old roof, gabled, high-pitched and tiled, substituted a flat roof of slate; then to give the required height to the upper story carried the front wall up and—it is hardly credible!—filled the blank space with a row of dummy

windows! The effect is ludicrous, and can only be described as one of genteel melancholy. You expect to see characters from Dickens' pages come out of the crazy door on to the rank grass plot above the little haha that divides it from the roadway, rather than ghosts attired in the curled perukes, lace ruffles, and buckled shoes of the Stuart Court. But ghosts there must be, and Combe is as emphatic on their existence as on its right to be considered Hampshire. Moreover, the evidence in favour is less easily controverted, there is no Ordnance Survey of ghosts! Impelled by a spirit of laudable curiosity the writer last summer accompanied a party of friends with due written permission from the owner to visit this haunted house. There was much to see and inquire about, a staircase from under which skeletons, mournfully small, had been dis-interred by people still living to vouch for the fact; a room where something dripped mysteriously from the ceiling, but was never seen—blood, could it be otherwise? But we can offer no elucidation of this eerie manifestation, for our investigation was barred by an under-keeper with *his* written instructions to forbid our entry! Could we desire proof more positive that the tales were true? Well, if we did, there was plenty, and if some of the ghostly visitations were explainable—as that the soft chanting of nuns still heard at times in one room is but the wind whispering round the bells in the short grey-shingled spire on a level with its windows and only some score of feet away—it was puzzle not to be gainsaid how to account for the story told by a local man, sturdy and sober as any son of Hampshire, and as unlettered as he was unimaginative, who within the last half-century came from the old house with a tale of "foreign folk" in the garden and described, accurately, their dress, which was the dress of the Stuart Court.

From Combe back to Hurstbourne Tarrant is a delightful road, unless perfection of surface be the chief desideratum, for it runs along the valley with copses creeping down the hillsides to its free grassy borders; but a wider and wilder range over Walbury and Pilot Hill leads by the old British trackway that ran past the British town by Seven Barrows to join the Harrow Way, roads so ancient we can but guess at the races whose naked feet wore the paths that were old "hollow ways" in Saxon times. Wild country this as any to be seen in our county, low gorse brakes, the close herbage of the moun-

tain-top, rough hedges scarce worthy of the name where the thorny sloebush and undefeatable bramble ripen their dark fruit. In these remote haunts the bright-eyed stone curlew, alack! no longer "so common" as in Gilbert White's day, yet finds a refuge from predatory man; game abounds; and when the elder bushes bow beneath the burden of their juicy fruit on an autumn day, you may see that the feathered folk can be greediest of greedy creatures! I have passed up a lane, where the dropping pellets stained the white chalk surface ruddy purple, by thrushes, finches, and blackbirds so replete they could barely hop a yard away, and the blackcap was far more intent on gorging himself to a like state than heedful of my presence. Here, too, have I watched through a lazy summer noon the kestrel's graceful hover and lightning pounce. Once there were three within view. They circled in nearing orbits till at length two, sighting the same quarry, swerved and swooping slantwise met. Had they been both too intent watching for incautious youth in the warren below to notice each other's approach? It seemed so, for the first "queek-queek, queek-queek" had more note of surprise than aught else. But then came a fight worth the watching as the two past-masters of aërial flight circled and swerved and closed with sharp, quick, squeaking cry, parted and circled, each intertwining circle higher as both strove to gain the upper plane to drop and buffet his adversary; twice, thrice, they closed, again and once again the whirling mass of brown feathers and beating wings parted, till in the midst of their tussle they blundered into the third hawk, and both turned to attack the new comer. Therewith the end: one towering up, up, up, sailed away; another swept round triumphant, poised for an instant, and fell like a leaden plummet to the valley depths—I misdoubt but there was another tragedy in bunnyland. The unfortunate vanquished came slowly back and, as luck had it, settled on an open patch of withered grass and grey stones not thirty paces from the writer, prone by a furze bush. If ever I saw sick and sorry bird it was that hawk.

As regards the views, each day you shall see a varied prospect when its every hour may alter the picture, and for the extent, seventy bonfires were seen from here on Jubilee night, and waiving the question as to Cobbett's accuracy with regard to the five counties, or the popular idea that the Isle of

Wight may be included,[1] here is the astonishing information given me by one old countryman :—"When the sappriminers was here, in old times, they made a telegram and from there they did use to spy into France, they did."

Will some folk-lorist of the future ever evolve from a legend based hereon that this was a triangulation station for a surveying party of Royal Engineers? *Sappers and Miners!!*

Another lane from Walbury over Out Hill, suggestive name, leads back to Hurstbourne through Faccombe village and winds through Faccombe Wood. The shade of the oaks, with

The "George and Dragon," Hurstbourne Tarrant.

an occasional beech rising above the hazel bushes, and the grassed paths cut through the wood-way tempt one to loiter after the bare Downs to the north. The church at Faccombe, a very modern structure, was built to replace the old one at Netherton, that stood behind a house with Inigo Jones' work, the Rectory in fact, in the valley to the west.

If Hurstbourne Tarrant and St. Mary Bourne—three miles further down the green valley—have been more affected by encroaching modernity than the secluded villages of the upper

[1] The Rev. Henry White, of whom anon, noted in his Diary Sept. 2, 1782, "Isle of Wight seen very clearly." This was from Conholt.

Bourne valley, they are sleepy and old fashioned enough yet, and old customs have lingered hereabouts within memory of many living. The maypole, painted blue and white, was still to be seen at Hurstbourne Tarrant some fifty years ago; and the May festivities were kept up at Whitsuntide, a week after "Bourne Revel Monday" had been duly celebrated on the Summerhaugh, the open space by the bridge. Nowadays May-day begging is fast dying out, though a few children may still come singing—

> "So please to see our garlands
> Made in the morning—whoop!"

The yell at the end is quite as important as the bunches of flowers tied on long sticks! In bygone times the boys blew their "'May-horns' of willow bark twisted in a spiral manner," the historian of St. Mary Bourne records;[1] the sweeps clattered shovels and brushes as they danced round their Jack-in-the-green, Jill rather, for the "walking bower" usually held "a female of their order, the representative probably of Maid Marian of the olden times." The Bourne Revel Club kept up the traditional festivities for some time, but the Revel did not survive many years of the nineteenth century. A platform was built over the stream by the Plough Inn, and there the sports were held, single-stick and wrestling being the chief attractions, and many noted wrestlers and adepts at "backsword-playing" came annually to compete for the half-guinea hat prizes.

"They fought bare-headed, with the left arm fastened to the waist, so that they might not use it to ward off blows. To hit an opponent on the face was against rules; but to hit him on the top of the head was the grand point, and the grandest of all to hit him so as to produce blood"

a one-time curate of Combe has recorded in a paper on the Hurstbourne Revel.[2] Small wonder that a local celebrity died in Fareham lunatic asylum from "clouts on the head he had received on the stage," by his own account! The "umsher," or umpire, by Dr. Stevens' showing had a fair share of the ills an umpire is heir to! This worthy—

"When the play became irregular or languid . . . suspended it for a time by calling 'bout'; and after a short pause it was resumed on his

[1] Dr. Stevens in his invaluable *History of St. Mary Bourne.*

[2] The Rev. J. E. Jackson, F.S.A., *Wiltshire Archæological and Natural History Magazine.* Vol. xxi., p. 334.

calling 'play.' On an appeal, if successful, he called 'blood,' if not, it was met with 'no head,' or 'play on.' In all stage matters his decision was final; although, as one may imagine, in such society it was often violently cavilled at."

In Hurstbourne Tarrant Church one can still trace some of the figures in the old frescoes. It is a twelfth-century building with Transitional Norman verging into Early English work, massive round pillars, lancet windows and an old round font. Under the yew in the churchyard lies a once well known local philanthropist, Joseph Blunt, one of Cobbett's friends. The wall of his house at the foot of Hurstbourne Hill was known as "the Wayfarers' Table," for pewter plates were kept on it piled with potatoes and pickled pork for any passer-by to help himself according to his need. The church at St. Mary Bourne when I visited it was undergoing restoration. The nave arcade is Transition Norman, but the chancel arch with its beaded moulding is earlier. There is also Decorated and Perpendicular work in the chancel, aisles and tower. There are continual entries in the seventeenth-century parish accounts of founders' bills for the church bells; the fifth, dated 1698, has for motto—

"On Earth Bells do ring,
In Heaven Angels Sing—Halaluiah."

But the chief interest in the church is the black marble font, one of the famous square ones. It is larger than that in the Cathedral and looks handsomer, not having such impressive surroundings, though in reality the carving is considerably less elaborate.

The village itself is one of the many in Hampshire where by the latest pattern in red-brick suburban architecture and grocery stores, are gathered homesteads of other fashion, timber framed seventeenth-century houses; and would you pry back to Roman Britain there are remains in plenty in the vicinity, and further beyond time reckoning are traces of dwellings,[1] even to the dim ages when Early Man first broke the virgin soil of the uplands with his rude flints in the unrecorded youth of Britain.

[1] A full account of the discovery of the pit-dwellings and other remains in the Bourne valley is given by Dr. Stevens.

CHAPTER XI

ON THE GREAT WESTERN HIGHWAY

THE country immediately north and west of Basingstoke is not the best sample of Hampshire's scenery, and along the main road for the first four miles or so after loitering in pleasant byways there is for the pedestrian nothing to be said but "Oh! the monotony!" The fringe of dusty grass and clipped hedge, with more dust-bank than hedgerow about it, on either side the roadway forces a wish—impiously expressed probably!—not only that the inventors of motor cars had simultaneously placed on the market a reliable dust layer, but that the local authorities were by law compelled to expend all motor fines on its purchase and use. For the motorist certainly this highway is a fine road—good surface, always excepting the dust, well open ahead, with no troublesome gradients, except the nasty hill above Hurstbourne Priors. A desirable road, therefore, for those who take motors to have merely superseded railway trains as a means of transit at greatest speed and least expenditure of energy, or whose idea of motoring is to race from one centre to another. But he whose car is a friend, by whose aid he may penetrate to the secret recesses of our old England, seeks other guide than the broad brown lines on the latest edition of a contour map. The traveller who would leave these highways to the business of traffic and seek pleasure in the byways may avoid the dull miles if he take the Stockbridge and Winchester road from Basingstoke, otherwise Winchester Street, and turn sharp to the right by a clump of beeches, just above the Stag and Hounds Inn, along a back lane over Basingstoke Down. The bordering beeches soon give place to hedge of the most irregular growth, if hedge at all. Nothing modern should break the soft

sweep of the low downs, though it must be confessed the prosperous looking farms, set in wide-acred fields, with copse and woodland, suit the homely picture well enough. They who would moralise how "the old order changeth" may here find practical illustration, and not only from the many grassy tumuli, for the lane crosses the line of the old Roman road through Silchester to the north—the present track joins it by Kite Hill and runs along it for a mile and a half, east of Worting and Wootton St. Lawrence, to the Kingsclere and Newbury road—and, by the well-named Crossway Farm at Worting, ancient and modern meet, old British Harrow Way, the Roman road, Rooksdown Lane, the present highway from London to the west, and the South Western Railway line.

Worting, with its shingle spire, looks quiet enough against the mass of trees bordering Worting House when its dusty highway is out of sight. It is the first village west of Basingstoke, and there are another two miles of open road before the lions on the gateposts of Oakley Park having an unending drink rouse malice and envy in the breast of the dusty wayfarer! Those who only know this country when summer has parched the herbage and dulled the trees to a uniform hue, might pass it as lacking in beauty by comparison with other parts of the county. Some places charm at all seasons; others, like pears, have their day. Hereabouts the day is essentially in spring-time. Autumn may load the woodlands with colour, but there is no heather to make a purple pageant of the open spaces, and the acres of stubble and fallow have a certain monotony that other corners, with woods quite as gorgeously clad, are not spoilt by. But with Spring, the hills and hedgerows will hold their own. The wind ripples the young grass and the soft green of the sprouting crops into wonderful shimmering waves, the hedges scent the air with fragrance almost as intoxicating as the perfume the breeze wafts over them from the beanfields. "*Cum faba floreścit, stultorum copia crescit*," quoted Alphonse Kerr, as he toured round his garden and moralised on his "fits of folly" when "*The beans were in blossom*"! There be some sorts of folly one could contemplate quite calmly—ay! and commit, also—at this season in many a corner not far removed from the great highway, in villages where quaintly-timbered old cottages under heavy thatch peep from among the pink blossom of the apple-trees in their gardens, above a gay tangle of tulips

and honesty, wallflowers and nodding daffodils, golden-eyed forget-me-not, codlings-and-cream, and many other old favourites between box-bordered paths. To dream under the white and purple lilacs, to listen for the gentler wood birds when the clamorous cuckoo and lusty thrush pause for a moment in their endless choruses, to watch the shadows creep and gather on the hillsides, and to forget that there is any world beyond suffice — while Spring lasts.

One would think a lifetime could be passed here, even in this twentieth century with railways and motors everywhere around, in eremitical ignorance of the ways of the world, in Arcadian simplicity concerning social shams, and that one whose orderly existence lay in such secluded byways as these lanes were some hundred years ago, would have little to put on record but what Nature offered, and such variety as the changing round of the season supplied. In short, we might look for another Gilbert White, hardly for a cunning analyst of human nature and critic of social foibles. Truly genius is nothing if not contradictory! In the shady lanes of a village in the valley yonder the Rector's daughter passed the uneventful days of her youth with no greater excitement than a dance at some neighbouring mansion or a ball at Basingstoke. But with only twenty-three years of life in this quiet corner of rural England, Jane Austen could pen such perfect studies of life and character as *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Northanger Abbey*, writ with the assured hand of one long versed in the world's ways, a keen-eyed student of manners and character! Yet Steventon, Deane and Ashe were her world, and a world greatly isolated by the badness of the lanes. The road that now connects Steventon and Deane was then a rough track nothing less substantial than a country cart could negotiate safely!

With all her devotion to Hampshire Jane was provokingly silent about it, and, but for reference to Spithead and the Isle of Wight in *Mansfield Park*, has depicted none of the scenes she knew and loved so well. Her contemporary, Maria Edgeworth, on the other hand, never having been in the county at all, attempted to give a description of its scenery in *Patronage*, and as a result of non-knowledge wrote about "rocks fringed with mountain shrubs," which is worse than its attendant "streams gushing on pebbly channels"! But though we may

regret the absence of descriptive touches, few nowadays would agree with Miss Mitford in her depreciation of Miss Austen's work as deficient in both taste and a "perception of the graceful as well as of the humorous"! Nor can one accept Mrs. Mitford's recollection of her old acquaintance and neighbour—"prettiest, silliest, most affected, husband-hunting butterfly"—except as the prejudiced version of a mother whose own daughter was plain and stout, and as deliberate a—dare we say "old maid"?—as the "perpendicular, precise, taciturn piece of 'single-blessedness'" her daughter criticised, whilst admitting the description to be biassed. How different Sir Walter Scott's generous appreciation :—

"That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going ; but this exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early."

"I find myself every now and then with one of her books in my hand. There's a finishing-off in some of her scenes that is really quite above everybody else."

Mrs. Mitford was the only child of Dr. Russell, rector of Ashe, and must often have seen Mrs. Austen in her red cloth habit, paying the daily visit to her children, put out to nurse in the village, or digging potatoes "in a round green frock like a day labourer," for Deane, Mr. Austen's first living, is only a mile from Ashe along the high-road from Basingstoke. The church was rebuilt about thirty years ago, and outside the most venerable looking thing in the pretty churchyard, planted with a variety of ornamental trees, is the bootscraper by the north door of the chancel, which is certainly big enough to be old! The rood has been preserved, but there is little else of the old church left. Nor has Deane much to show, for the church, as the date in the porch records, was built in 1818 ; but the manor house is Elizabethan. Steventon, more remote, has older traces. It was a manor in Saxon times, and a cross shaft of Saxon work was found there that may be seen in the wall, and there are said to be "hundreds of tons" of Norman-worked stone about to this day. The church stands by the new manor house above the coverts of oak and hazel on a hill some little

distance from the string of cottages that go to make Steventon village, and its spire is finish to a pretty picture, rising from the old elms and dark yews above the meadow along which the road winds up by the covert side to the manor house. The old yew and the twisted thorns are only a trifle older and more twisted than when Jane Austen came up the Church Walk between its high hedges, but the new house, the railway and other alterations time and changing tastes have wrought must have altered the place almost past recognition, though North Waltham village looks as though its thatched cottages with time-toned brick and massive timber frames, its apple-trees and lilacs, cannot have changed an iota with the passing years, except to gain an added charm and mellowness. Its church, however, has been entirely renovated.

Another change Miss Austen would note were she now to visit her old home, is that the country women no longer spin. In the seventeenth century the clothiers petitioned:—

"They heretofore made in Basingstoke thirty broadcloths and one hundred kersies which employed the poor of eighty parishes. Now there are not more than seven broadcloths and twenty kersies made weekly, and their cloth lies on their hands, the merchants refusing to buy."

We have seen how the wool trade decayed at Alresford. Nearly half a century after this petition, in 1677 was passed the "Act for Burying in Woollen only, for the lessenting of the Importation of Linen from beyond the seas, and the encouragement of the Woollen and Paper Manufacturers of this Kingdom," the results of which were more permanent in parochial registers than in improvement of trade! The Steventon cottagers spun their own flax as well as wool. Their grand-daughters have probably never seen one of the long wooden machines, with their big wheels, and spindles loosely wrapped with flax and wool that busy fingers would form into thread for more serviceable material than can be purchased in these degenerate days of cheap production. The chief industry now of all this neighbourhood is found in the paper mills at Laverstoke.

From the hill above Worting the land slopes to the valley of Test, worthy rival even of beautiful Itchen. Rival—nay, rather mate, for their waters mingle ere Hampshire's bounds be passed. A rich and pleasant land Test's valley, from the flat sea marshes up to the head waters at Polhampton,

above Overton, where she wells out from the hidden reservoirs of the chalk. In wet seasons the highest spring is by Church Oakley, where may be noted a peculiarity that is not uncommon with these rivers from the chalk, an intermittent stream. For awhile a spring bubbles up and flows gaily, then, as though tired of the troublous life above ground, disappears in a lessening string of pools down the watercourse, to reappear later. Only when the chalk ranges are unusually saturated will a stream ripple along all the length of the dry nullah.

Overton, to me, seems rather a sad little townlet for all the quaintness of its streets. It has never, as the saying is, arrived, though its name places it far back among the townships of Wessex, and Parliamentary records show it to have been one of the first boroughs represented in the county. But Overton's Parliamentary rights like its market are things of the past; its silk mills languished; the whistle of the railway train, that heralded growth and prosperity to many a more out of the way corner, brought less to Overton than did the merry sound of passing coach horn it deposed.

Despite much alteration and restoration, Overton Church has still some Norman work remaining. In one of William of Wykeham's registers there is an account of a curious case of sanctuary here. A stranger, John Bentley, had by maladventure killed a man, and sought refuge in the church. After evensong when talking to one Spike, a local cobbler, the unhappy Bentley was suddenly pushed out on to the road, and immediately set upon by the townsfolk and haled off to the stocks, and thence to Winchester for trial. But the Bishop's wrath was aroused at such flagrant violation of the rights of the Church, and commissioners were sent to inquire into the business and mete out punishment to the offenders.

"Do you sleep at Overton or travel through?" was the question in coaching days, put to all travellers from London to the West, for it was the end of the first day's stage, and some sixty horses stood in the stables of the Poyntz Arms, to supply fresh teams for the coaches or relays for posting. The hostel stood at the corner of the cross roads on the space now occupied by the schools. It was named after Major-General Poyntz, and there the Prince Regent and many another noted follower of the Vine put up.

This hunt originated in 1790, when William Chute of The

Vyne started a pack of harriers—*multum in parvo* was the motto inscribed over the kennels, since pulled down, by the manor-house. Hunting then was a very different affair to what it is in these days of well-advertised meets. If the hounds were in condition the master, in his long pink coat, with powdered hair and pigtail tied with black ribbon, and the huntsman carrying a twisted bugle, might be found by the covert side perhaps as often as three times a week. After a hard day, or if many of the hounds were lamed by the sharp flints that abound in field and lane all over this countryside, a longer rest would be required. Should luck be favourable and they got a run a cap of half a crown a head was made after the kill. Those were happier days for Hampshire sportsmen; the commons were not enclosed, and the barbed wire that now has turned the Vine country into a birdcage was undreamed of even in the worst nightmare that ever followed a hunt dinner! None the less, Mr. Apperley of Beaurepaire, better known as "Nimrod," was fain to confess, "I never hunt in Hampshire when I can help it." But many a cheery yarn is told of the old days; of record runs; of good hounds such as New Forest Jasper, one of the fathers of the pack, who had his portrait painted, because the master considered dogs as well as humans should have their family pictures; or Spanker, who was earthed in Chilton wood after a twelve-mile run and found five days later beside the dead fox, but recovered to run for many another season. As Mr. Chute grew old he ceased to jump and, according to "Æsop," "always got off and took hold of his horse's tail, who drew him up"! The same authority recounts how on one occasion Chute told a farmer to move a hurdle. The man when he had done so remarked, "Now you can come."

"Stop, let me get off, and I will turn my horse over the ditch," said the cautious old gentleman.

"But there is no ditch and your horse will walk over."

"But I fancy there is a ditch, and that is the same thing."

And get off he did, and solemnly followed his gee through the gap!

Down the broad road of a morning come the Overton workers to Laverstoke mill. It stands right on the highway and cannot possibly be missed by any passer by, the high wall and policemen on duty at the arched entrance are so surprisingly out of

keeping with the rural beauty of the surrounding country! The mill, and the rough details of the manufacture—its actual processes are kept profoundly secret—have been described again and again, from Dickens' *Household Words* to, doubtless, the—newest—*Encyclopædia Britannica*! So everyone knows that the paper is made with most scrupulous care from new linen, and that the regulations of necessity are very stringent, to avoid any possible tampering with paper worth, literally, a good deal more than its weight in gold.

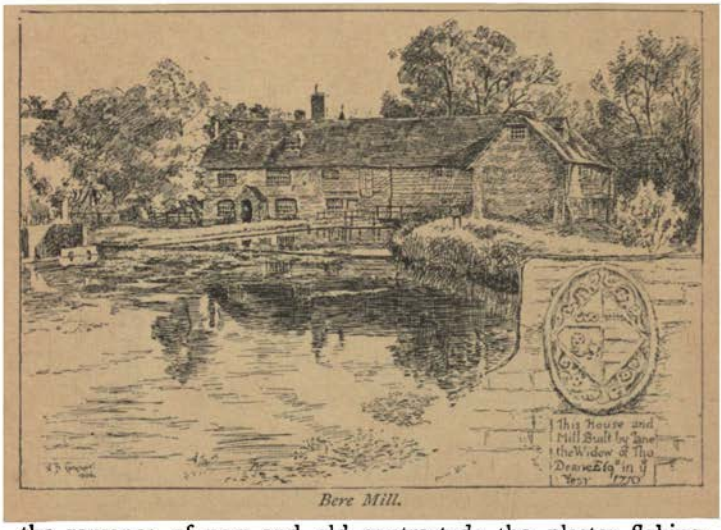
From the days when the young son of Charles the Simple was smuggled out of Laon, hidden in a truss of straw, and brought to Athelstan's Court at Winchester, Hampshire has given refuge to many a fugitive from France. The founder of the Laverstoke paper mill was one of these. He was a descendant of a Castilian noble in the train of Elvira, daughter of Alphonso IV, on her coming to France at the close of the eleventh century, who became the ancestor of a powerful family in Languedoc and Dauphiné. The de Portals for over two centuries were Capitouls of Toulouse, but when the Reformation of the Christian faith, like its inception, brought "not peace but a sword," they were among the first of the French noblesse who suffered for their convictions. A century completed their overthrow, for Louis XIV broke faith with his Protestant subjects and revoked the Edict which was Charter of what little liberties they might enjoy. Therewith the Huguenot de Portals lost lands and lives, but three of the family escaped from torture and death to find eventual refuge in England. Of Jean François de Portal's escape and after adventures there is no record beyond that he died in London years later; but the tale has been handed down how, when ruin came on the Château de la Portalerie, an old nurse concealed the children in an oven, and when this homely refuge had baffled the searching of the angry soldiery, young Henri de Portal and his brother, Guillaume, were hidden in wine casks and were safely smuggled by faithful friends and servitors on board a lugger. Their perilous journey ended safely, and it is believed the friendly port at which they landed was Southampton. Friendly, that is, for refugees who counted freedom of faith a dearer possession than lands and country, for there was little friendly feeling towards France in the seaport her navy had so often attacked.

To Southampton, at any rate, young Henri eventually came, and there found already established the Huguenot colony that centred round the French church of St. Julian. With the aid of his fellow emigrants the lad obtained employment in one of the mills at South Stoneham, run by those of his *confrères* who were skilled in the manufacture of paper. There he learnt his trade and, more important still for the fortunes of himself and his family, met Sir William Heathcote, then, like himself, a young man. Report tells how the charm of the clever young Huguenot won him the friendship of his influential neighbour; at any rate, we find the Squire of Hursley actively forwarding the Frenchman's fortunes, and when the tenant of Bere Mill, near Whitchurch, died, in 1710, Sir William offered the lease to his friend, the widowed Madame Deane being very thankful to be quit of it. To Bere Mill accordingly came de Portal with a contingent of French workmen. Nor was this all. The paper mill proved a successful venture, and commercial papers of all kinds were supplied from it so largely that in 1718 a lease was taken of the neighbouring mill of Laverstoke, in order to extend the business. In 1727 Henry Portal[1] obtained the privilege of making the notes of the Bank of England, in addition to his other work. It was doubtless a fortunate circumstance for him that at this juncture Sir Gilbert Heathcote, the uncle of his friend at Hursley, was Governor of the Bank. So greatly did the business prosper that Henry Portal built another mill at Laverstoke, where, with due leave obtained from the Bank of England to visit the factory, the curious may see set into the wall of the present structure[2] the stone on which he recorded its erection: *This House and Mill was built by Henry Portal in* 1719. Thus for nearly 200 years the business has been handed down from father to son, an almost unique instance in the history of English manufactures.

Bere Mill still stands. You may see it from the high road almost hidden among the bordering elms and poplars that guard Test's "troutful" waters jealously from view, in the valley below the workhouse on the road to Whitchurch. To this quaint old mill-house of yellow-washed brick Henry Portal

[1] Henri de Portal was naturalised at the Court of Quarter Sessions in 1711; being described in the document as "Henry Portall, of South Stoneham, gentleman." [2] The mill was rebuilt by Sir Wyndham Portal.

brought his bride Dorothy, the daughter of Mr. Henry Hasker, of Overton. It is now a somewhat ramshackle building, having served for corn mill and malt house before it became one of the generating stations that supply electric current to the new mills. Narrow, twisty stairs lead to the old malt house with its floor of perforated bricks, and under the weathered tiles are the bins, long empty, where the linen rag for paper, and afterwards grain, was stored. If the rats have made holes in the walls, and the boards of the uneven floors gape apart, there is none of the dirt of decay anywhere, and here is

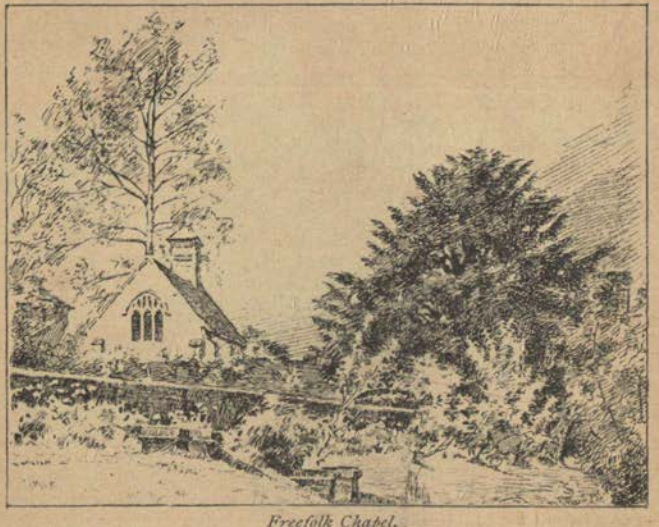


Bere Mill.

the romance of new and old contrasted: the plaster flaking from the rough walls below the worn cross-beams on to the very timbers of the disused mill wheel, centuries old as like as not, that lies cobwebbed and unheeded alongside the winking copper and polished steel of an awesome mass of machinery pulsating with the magic force it harnesses to transmit power to the whirling wheel-bands of the modern mill some two miles away. The sight is as incongruous as the dull thud of the monster heard through the musical tinkle and soft ripple of the stream by the red-brick bridge, below which fat trouts lie lazy, their speckled sides now hid and anon disclosed in

the quivering weed beds, as unconcerned as though there were no humming 23 h.p. turbine within a stone's throw!

All the villagers work on the Laverstoke estate or in the paper mills, and permission to settle in the village was regarded as a special privilege. But even here the unsatisfied spirit of the age is felt, and the young folk begin to question if the life of their fathers be good enough for them, lured by the greater license of big cities to paths remote from the quiet routine of life in a country setting. There is no flare of red brick in this modern village. The cottages, grey-brown, russet, and



Freefolk Chapel.

creeper covered, stand back from the elm-arched road, amid the fruit trees, tile-roofed well house, and flowers of their gardens: whilst above a grassy slope the new church looks across to where the Test's clear waters, having passed beneath trees and brushwood by the old walled Rectory garden, sing gaily through the meadowlands beyond the little chapel of St. Nicholas Freefolk.

Even in this county of many churches it is curious to find three within half a mile as here, for in the Park stands another ancient building, with Saxon work in its rebuilt walls

and record in Domesday Book of its existence as a Parish Church. Both the old churches are small and used now only as mortuary chapels. Some of the weather-worn stones in old Laverstoke churchyard bear Huguenot names yet decipherable, and within the chapel are many memorials of bygone owners of the manor.

Freefolk Chapel dates from the thirteenth century, and the manner and reason of its existence is set forth in an old document still preserved. Translated it runs :—

Clement, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God. To our venerable brother the Archbishop of Canterbury health and happiness.

A noble man one William of Chabegrave of the diocese of Winchester, has humbly petitioned Us (as he is so far from his Parish Church that he cannot on account of floods, especially in the winter time, and other great risks, conveniently go to hear the Divine Offices and receive the Sacraments of the Church) that he may build a Chapel on his own estate, and have a Chaplain attached to it, to whom for his maintenance he is prepared to assign a sufficient allowance of his own goods—if We will consent to grant him permission.

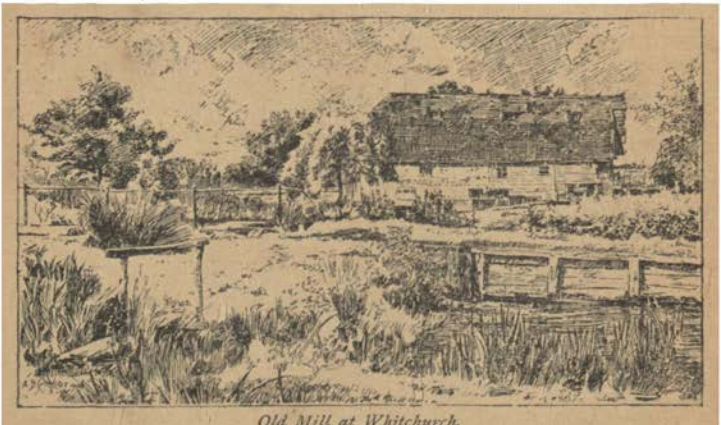
As, however, the Bishop of Winchester is working at present at a great distance, We trust the application to thy brotherly care to grant so much as thou deemest expedient (without injury to another) to this noble man with reference to what he offers and asks. Given at Viterbo on the ides of October of the Pontificate iiij in the year the third : [A.D. 1265].

This is endorsed "Pope's Clements Bull for Freefolk Chapple, 1265." It was a Parish Chapel, with an attached priest. The manor house chapel mentioned in Domesday Book, like the one at Quidhampton, was a private one. In this little church during recent restorations some remains of old coffins and inscriptions were found under the barrelled floor, and on the wall is a hatchment of the Pearse family, at one time owners of the property south of the road.

Once above the rich water meads the country south of the Test valley is wild and lonely ; low-sweeping downs, wide-spreading corn-fields. A lane bordered for some distance by fine ash trees runs from Freefolk to Micheldever, between big fields and occasional coppice for some three miles till the oak, hazel and fir of Freefolk and Cranbourne Woods come as grateful relief to the monotony. Then for the best part of a mile beyond the woodland a screen of closely-planted young beech fences the way-side on the west, to where the lane abuts on the main roads from Basingstoke, Andover and Stockbridge, just over a mile from where the parallel route

from Overton runs out to the west of Popham Beacons. Superficially there is little difference between them, but the gradients are stiffer on the Overton road as it crosses White Hill; still this allows a view the flatter road lacks—northwards to Beacon Hill, standing in lonely glory between the wooded crest of Sidown and Ladle Hill, the dark line of beeches that ring Sydmonton Park topping the ridge beyond the firs of the Belt. But the river, the villages, and the highway lie hidden in the valley.

In coaching days, Whitchurch, a mile beyond Freefolk, was of importance when passengers from Oxford came by way of Newbury to join the Exeter coach, and waited for the



Old Mill at Whitchurch.

mail at the White Hart by the cross roads. Now the traveller hurries on, for there is little to detain him in the town. The houses cluster in the sheltered hollow and run up to the white scarp of the hill-side where the martin finds resting-place, and hard-living plants struggle for life-hold on the thirsty face of the chalk. It is not a bad centre for the tourist, for it lies astride the highways and boasts two railway stations.

There are only three bays of the old church left, and part of the tower, the rest of the building is modern, but antiquaries do not need telling that within is an old Saxon burial stone that was found during the restoration. The inscription records that the body of Frithburga lies there "*in pace sepultum.*"

CHAPTER XII

ANDOVER

THE stranger who has wandered round Andover ignorant of its history would probably judge the town to date no further back than at most the day of stage coaches, and mainly from the coming of the railway, for it suggests a very recent "Sending" from some utilitarian and entirely inartistic genius—the little brick villas are as ubiquitous as Dana Da's kittens and far less varied as to appearance! Andover would seem, in fact, so absolutely modern that the only way to remember its age, even if you know where to find the one or two old corners that do remain, is to go away and try to forget what it looks like! For Andover is old. Very *very* old. Back into the dim ages, when Neolithic man lorded it over the stretching Downs yet dotted with his memorials, centuries before history has a word to say, back into the beginning of things may this town that appears so essentially modern claim its origin.

As language is the most tenacious of human attributes, "the woman among nations," to which a people cling when all other characteristics have vanished, so of languages, men of science tell us, place-names and water-names linger in use when all others are lost, and these wise men now rule that Andover not only perpetuates one water-word—the Celtic *an*, instead of the old guide-book reason that it was "the ford over the Anna, or Anton"—but the yet more ancient *eure*, or *oure*, a water-name possibly coming through countless generations from pre-Celtic man, and *the* oldest word in our conglomeration of a language. History is still silent when the Romans carried their roads through and built their villas in the vales round Andover: but that there was an extensive Roman settlement in this neighbour-

hood is proved by the number of "remains," a lengthy list and as yet an incomplete one. The best known discoveries are the pavements from villas at Abbotts Ann and Thruxton which were given to the British Museum. We can but picture for ourselves how, as the wild tribes succumbed to the rule and order of Latin civilisation, villas sprang up in the cultivated and sheltered areas, and each became a centre, a local settlement, with its farms and small houses for the British serfs, such as all these ruins show, of more solid construction than their old wattle huts, "the shanties of Britain," as Caractacus called them—a system, it has been suggested, that was the germ from which, modified by subsequent Teutonic customs, the Feudal System eventually evolved. Be this as it may, it is not till after the coming of the Saxon invaders that Andover's page of romance and history opens.

Andover seems to have been a favourite place with Edgar, the peaceable king monkish chroniclers did their best to whitewash. But whatever the good monks may have had to say of a ruler who wisely kept in with Dunstan, the strong man of the day, the ballad-mongers for many a generation found matter for their verse in the king's amours, and in two instances the scene was laid at Andover. According to William of Malmesbury, the king on a visit there heard on all sides the praises of a local beauty; his fancy was caught, his pride piqued, so he commanded the lady should be brought to him. But her mother, Edgar's hostess—one must needs remember *autres temps, autres mœurs!*—contrived that a slave should take her daughter's place, nor did the king discover the fraud till the following morning. Thereon he freed the slave girl and kept her "till he took Elfthrida, the daughter of Ordgar, to be his legitimate wife," and therewith to Andover's chief romance, and no better place could be for the telling than the spot associated by many a legend and all likelihood—whatever some historians argue to the contrary—with the first tragedy of the tale.

Half-way between Hurstbourne Priors and Andover the high road passes by a corner of Harewood—all that is left of the great forest that once spread here for miles. Many paths cut through it. In the lower half the old Roman road from Winchester can be traced; between its two chief sections runs the high road from Andover up Bere Hill, and where this bends

south round an angle of the wood an avenue of fine old trees leads to the upper woodland, and branches right and left by narrow tracks between the hazel undergrowth. Turning north-west and up the mossy path to the left some three hundred yards further you will find yourself by Deadman's Plack. The monument, a high stone cross, stands on rising ground in a desolate corner, amid scattered remains of alfresco feasts, broken bottles and fire-blackened stones. The inscription has been so cut over by touring 'Arries desirous of commemorating their immortal names and genius, that it is decidedly difficult to make any of it out, a puzzle that will increase as fresh relays of the immortals thus achieve greatness in such inexpensive fashion. It is not itself of any antiquity, having been erected only in 1835 by Colonel Iremonger, but so far as 'Arry is concerned it might have been placed there by the penitent Queen herself and been no more sacred from devastation. Apart from these undesirable traces of antihistoric man, the spot has its own charms, the delights that await the nature lover in every wood in spring, when primrose and hyacinth carpet the glades with their royal blue and soft amber; in the sweet stillness of a summer evening, or when the black privet berries show up against the russet yellow of the fading oak leaves when autumn hangs brown nuts on the hazels and decks the woodlands with scarlet and crimson. Jays chatter close by, the exquisite blue on their barred wings dulling the very "speedwell's darling blue" and rivalling the sky above. Woodpigeons coo in the green depths. Jay and pigeon—gossip and sentiment—both be in keeping with the story of this cross. The pigeon was undoubtedly a pretty one and cooed to the discomfiture of an English noble and an English king! But the simile will carry no further, for little enough of the pigeon can there have been in Elfrida's character. So to recall the tale.

There dwelt in Devon an Earl with a daughter whose "charms had so fascinated the eyes of some persons that they commended her to the King," whereon Edgar despatched his Hampshire Ealdorman, Athelwold, to view the maiden on his behalf and bring her to him should her beauty equal the reports. But Athelwold arriving fell straightway in love with the fascinating lady himself, said nought of his mission, married the belle, and sent word to his royal master rumour had been overkind to the damsel. Elfrida at first was probably content enough

with her Ealdorman and the lot he contrived for her, but beauty that had set tongues a-wagging from Devon to Winchester soon started gossip in her new home. It came to the ears of the King that Athelwold had wedded a very lovely dame, and he told his false friend he desired greatly to see the lady. Then Athelwold, "terrified almost to death," played a fool's part. Perchance "Love's young dream" was too new to allow suggestion it could ever pass, at any rate the chronicle continues :—

"he hastened before to his wife, entreating that she would administer to his safety by attiring herself as unbecomingly as possible : then first disclosing the intention of such a proceeding. But what did not this woman dare? She was hardy enough to deceive the confidence of her first lover, her first husband ; to call up every charm by art, and to omit nothing which could stimulate the desire of a young and powerful man."

Have we suggested Edgar was susceptible? Beauty's wiles were not displayed in vain, and the faithless fair left her Ealdorman to bemoan his folly, doubtless as mankind in like case has ever done, by anathematising her sex! "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain," wrote the wise man, who, by all accounts, was best qualified to judge ; but perchance there is some extenuating mercy for those on whom is showered the fatal gift that we less favoured mortals need not. Edgar, however, had no mercy for the friend who had deceived him. "Dissembling his indignation, he sent for the earl into a wood at Warewelle, called Harewood, under pretence of hunting, and ran him through with a javelin." That is the Malmesbury monk's version of the tale, which Andover, despite Mr. Freeman, accepts as a history of her forest. The sequel of the story, when Elfrida, having sinned with a king, connived at the death of a husband, and murdered a step-son, set about making her peace with Heaven, belongs to Wherwell, and shall there be set down. We must back to Andover, and, for choice, by forest paths, through Upping Copse to the Winchester road, which runs over open down and arable land above the Anton valley, but byways in plenty lead to that twisting stream with its mills and fringing willows, and the villages of Goodworth and Upper Clatford.

There are bits of old-time Hampshire everywhere to be found among, and at times behind, the modern house fronts, as, for instance, in a small villa by the road in Goodworth, or Lower,

Clatford which was originally a malt-house, and has many old beams and odd corners within, despite its demurely nineteenth-century frontage; and also some carved oak doors that must have a story, though their owners know it not. The beautiful design, an elaborate linen pattern, claims for them some more honoured position than—under a coat of paint!—a cellar door, or even the cupboard in a linen room. The village church on the further side of the stream has Transitional Norman and Early English work within. At Upper Clatford, where a bridge leads over the clear stream, that gurgles a low song above the rippled weeds on its chalk-gravel bed, near a big willow and shallow weir, a shapely, branching yew and the little church stand in the quiet water-meadows with a venerable air, despite recent restoration—the date given above the arch in the south porch is 1890. Ivy trails up the plastered, weather-stained walls, the tiled roof has a warm, red-brown note, and where the plaster has worn or fallen away, and flints and old stones peep out, the tower has a battered air quite befitting a building that has such old work as the remains of the Norman arcading where the chancel opens from the nave. To the west of the village rises Bury Hill and its ancient earthworks, easily reached, for it lies just off the road from Andover that crosses the valley at the head of this village. The big, rough moat and vallum are hid for the most part under roughly-matted undergrowth, hardy firs, and hawthorns. I heard a tale of an archæological lecturer when descanting on the absence of a well being interrupted by an old labourer: "Did used to be well 'ere when I were a lad; 'e were dangerous an' 'e was filled in." This was in the big arena by the clump of sad pines and bushes in the centre of the golden carpet of corn, for Ceres reigns peacefully now where once ruthless Bellona queened it.

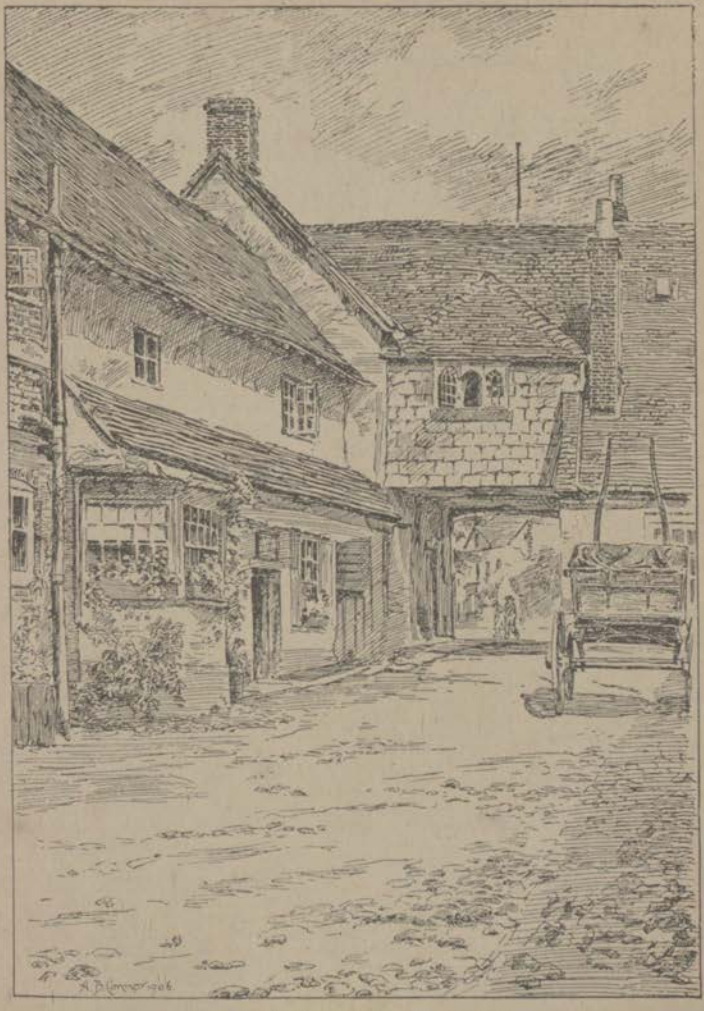
Little else than tradition remains of old Andover at all, for the Norman church, where, during the awful thunderstorm on Christmas Eve, 1127, the officiating priest was struck dead at midnight mass—and the startled worshippers saw a ghostly pig careering about the building!—was "removed" within the memory of living man, and the present structure erected. It was said to be in ruinously unsafe condition, past any restoration, but the tales told of the difficulty experienced in pulling down the so-called tottering ruin are no evidence of instability.

The worthy vicar, who was responsible for the deed and himself furnished the means, may have suffered from nerves, or his architect may have insufficiently studied the fabric—what matter, the fine old church has vanished past regaining; only an archway stands by the gate to remind another generation when re-building is required once more that their forefathers' work bore the test of time better than much of their immediate progenitors'.

Just before the church is reached by the hilly street from

Bury Hill from Little Ann.

the wide market-place is one of the oldest bits of Andover town. Outside there is nothing particularly ancient about either the Angel Inn or the house adjoining, but the inn yard is a quaint peep of the past, and in the house is one of the chief relics of the place, a fine old carved stone mantel, and the thick walls of the cellars beneath were never the work of latter times. The house is now a leather-seller's shop, and leather in every conceivable shape is piled on shelves round the walls and across the old mantel, thereby entirely hidden, but luckily uninjured, and a few minutes'



The Yard of the Angel Inn, Andover.

shifting of the stock in the drawers and pigeon-holes will disclose it to view. In this house, as a part of the ancient hostelry, legend has it King John once slept. There is nothing in the present appearance of the room pointed out to suggest it except the thickness of the wall, which may be judged by the depth of a sunk cupboard, and that is quite in keeping with the massive masonry of the cellars. This is now the wall between the house and the inn, and was left when the modern frontage and partition walls were substituted elsewhere.

John was not the only monarch to stay in this town the Wessex kings visited: Henry VII came after Perkin Warbeck's rebellion was ended; the unfortunate Stuarts were here —James I; Charles before the second battle of Newbury; his son when Prince of Wales slept at the White Hart; and when the Stuart star fell again to its final setting James II, retreating from Salisbury in 1688, came to the Priory House and supped with his traitor companions, Prince George, who "drunk or sober," according to Charles II, had "nothing in him," and "Ormond, who was through life taciturn and bashful," says Macaulay. They but waited opportunity to desert to Dutch William, so the meal must have been a sad one. The King was overwhelmed with his misfortunes."[1] Less tragic was the next royal coming, when George III spent a night here on the way to pay one of his visits to Weymouth. In eighteenth-century days Andover's chief excitements were at election times, so a royal visit was a great event. Of rival Parliamentary candidates, and their wild doings and adventures, many a tale is told. The most notorious was Sir Francis Delavel, whose lawyer paid for his practical joking by a broken leg, for which he charged his client £500 damages. The story of how he invited the mayor and corporation in the name of the colonel and his officers, and the regiment in the name of the municipality, and his rough handling when the fraud was discovered, is too well known to need repeating. No wonder the irate officers threw the man of the law through the window! On the whole, looking back over its centuries of history, Andover would seem to have been always a law-abiding, possibly somewhat time-serving, community; therefore it is curious to find it should have been selected as the place of martyrdom for John

[1] Macaulay. *History of England*, chap. ix.

Body, a Somerset man, who, after being condemned at Winchester for heresy and treason, was hung, drawn and quartered at Andover in November, 1583. Dying he declared: "I suffer death this day because I deny the Queen to be the supreme head of the Church of God in England. I never committed any other treason, unless they will have hearing mass or saying the 'Hail, Mary,' to be treason." With this one tragedy, the echoes of battle and rumours of war in the Rebellion days, and a fainter echo of distant strife when French prisoners were quartered here in the eighteenth century, Andover's days have passed unruffled since Norman times. Now and again some stricken sufferer was "touched for the King's evil."

"'Lye still, lazàr, wheras thou lyest,
'Looke thou goe not henceaway;
'Ile make thee a whole man and a sound
'In two howers of the day.'"

as the old *Legend of Sir Aldingar* has it. Seventy-five in all from this town were "touched," till with the death of Anne the mysterious gift from the Confessor was lost for ever, or more critical ages saw fraud in healings which were accompanied with gifts of gold! Andover's bells rang punctually out on all occasions of official rejoicing. The market, which existed by right before the memory of man, filled the streets with country folk and produce; her commerce was not inconsiderable, the leathersellers carried on a large trade, the factories turned out their silks and druggets, their serges, broadcloths and shalloons, for the woollen trade in old days was important here. Even what looked at one time to be a profitless speculation led eventually to greater prosperity. In 1789 a company was formed to cut a canal up the Test valley from Southampton Water. The scheme became so notorious that Pye, the poet-laureate, then at Testwood near Totton, wrote a parody:—

"Southampton's wise sons found their river so large,
Tho' 'twould carry a *ship* 'twould not carry a barge.
But soon this defect their sage noddles supply'd,
For they cut a snug *ditch* to run close by its side.
Like the man who, contriving a hole through his wall
To admit his two cats, the one great, t'other small,
Where a *great hole* was made for *great puss* to pass through,
Had a *little hole* cut for his little cat too."[1]

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, Sept., 1800.

This scheme failed, but the "barge-river" track provided a route for the railway from Romsey.

This junction town is an excellent centre from which to explore the country round; and further afield to the camps and plains over the Wiltshire border; to Stonehenge, that grey mystery; to Salisbury, whither many a generation of neighbouring farmers have driven to weekly market, with a lurcher or two following the cart—empty to start with, possibly, but, *mirabile dictu*, containing sundry hares on arrival! The roads in Hampshire have, as a glance at the map will show, some eleven points to which the lines converge, with Winchester for centre of all, like an attenuated starfish with long thin arms branching out to lesser starfish at their extremities; or perhaps a parent spider with web surrounded by her progeny's were apter imagery. Of the eleven, Andover makes centre for the roads of the north-west from Newbury, Ludgershall and north Wiltshire, joined by the Amesbury road at Weyhill; the road from Salisbury comes in by the old earthworks on Balksbury Hill; that from Stockbridge by the Clatfords; the Winchester highway we touched returning from Harewood, and the great road from Basingstoke we already know. The Hurstbourne Tarrant and Newbury road also leads to country we have traversed, but though tourist itineraries for the most part ignore the country on the southern slope of the Hurstbourne ridge a day can be worse spent than exploring the many lanes that lead up to the high chalk range north of the Andover valley.

Almost am I tempted not to disclose where some of these delightful corners may be found, lest when Fate next gives me a holiday from "the stuffy prison of everyday life" and I hie me to a favourite haunt 'twill be to find the shy nymph Solitude has fled from the glade, affrighted by the motor's hoot, scared at the approach of too many curious tourists! Yet, so rare a thing is Happiness in this world, that he who knows where any of her secret springs lie hid and would conceal his knowledge from others deserves to go for ever athirst through a drear wilderness of misery. After which reflection high roads and dust, police traps and statistics may be consigned to deserved oblivion, and only the twisty lanes, with their wealth of blossom, scent and fruit, the secret corners and the hidden springs should claim the service of this pen. Such lanes there

The "George" Inn, Andover.

are in plenty round Andover. Be it my task, then, to attempt description enough to give others some introduction to the delights there discovered, admitting without any reservation that if charm seem lacking "the fault's in the prover."

The high road makes its exit from the town to the east of the church through less prosperous Andover. The road is a good one, but we will divert to the east down a lane that leaves it just before the railway is reached. A hundred yards on this twists under the line itself and winds to Smannell, where it forks to St. Mary Bourne and Little London, and there branches again through an outlying strip of Doles Wood, and westerly to Upper Enham and the main road. Delightful hedges of hazel, ash, beech, maple, border the lanes with a tangled subgrowth of briar, bramble, and bracken, all matted together with creepers—a joyful playaunce in spring-time. But it is almost more beautiful on a clear day in autumn while the purple of knapweed and mauve of the scabious and wild sage still dot the roadside along by the soft yellow spires of mullein and more gaudy ragworts. Berries, red, black, purple, or still bronzy green, replace the fragile beauty of scattered blossoms. A cottage with arch of clipped yew over the tiny gate has a garden ablaze with flowers. From a gap above the field at the turn of the lane to Enham you get a faint peep of the Downs to the south-west beyond Andover church spire. The stubble fields have a gold-brown glory all their own even when their wealth is garnered ; the woods stand impassive under the hot sun, tinting to rival the cornfields, or green yet with that last deep greenness that precedes their final pageant of colouring. The rooks caw lazily, and even the bee's hum has less of pressing business, some of the fullness of content that is the keynote of autumn's music. By Doles Wood, a remnant of the great Chute Forest that stretched from Clanville to Finkley, the lane joins the main road, and the highway here, though a steady pull up for another mile to the top of Hurstbourne Hill, is worth the climb, not only to get the fine view of the Bourne Valley and the high Downs already described, but to enjoy the charm by the wayside—for is it not shaded by beautiful Doles Wood?—and any for whom oak above hazel undergrowth, with silver birch, ash and fir interspersed, hawthorn that spring decks with silver and autumn with royal red, the joyful song of wood birds, and soft jangle of cattle bells

in the bracken on Hurstbourne Common may have no charm, had best go otherwhere than to country lanes for pleasure, and so with their misguidedness we have no concern!

Doles House, the entrance marked by squat, grey-flint gate-pillars, stands back out of sight in the wood, and in Knight's Enham Church are the Dewar hatchments and many other memorials to dead and gone owners of Doles and Enham House. Enham lies on the lower slope of the hill, halfway between Andover and the top of the ridge. There are some fine elms, and one or two quaint buildings, but the old house was burnt down some score of years ago. The church, St. Michael's, is nearly a mile away up a lane where the high road forks south of the old Roman road, of which presently. It is worth a visit, though what remains of the Early English building is a somewhat melancholy reminder of departed greatness. Among the many mural tablets on its walls is one to Miss Jane Seed, aged nine years. The name is connected with another example of how names once attached to localities linger long after the very existence of the originals may be forgotten, for at the end of the Rectory garden is a grass track, bordered by hedges of hazel and box, known as the Seed Walk. The obvious interpretation of this name would in due course be that it had something to do with seeds and seedlings, but it happens that the Rector of Knight's Enham and Smannell in 1747 was the Rev. Jeremiah Seed, M.A., a well known preacher in his day, and this shady path was his favourite walk. Quiet as this corner seems, at Knight's Enham we again touch national history, for here Alphege of Canterbury held a great council in 1008, the days of Ethelred the redeless, that legislated for sundry Church matters and the concerns of the national forces.

A winding lane with sentinel elms along the hedges leads westwards to Charlton and Foxcott. The latter consists of little more than a church and a farm, just beyond the headwaters of the infant Anton. Nathless Foxcott is the parish, though Charlton, half a mile or so to the east, has the air of a prosperous village on the outskirts of busy Andover, which induces a wonder why, when the church was rebuilt in the middle of the last century, a new site was not obtained, as at Netherton and Otterbourne, instead of the old one, some two hundred yards up a delightfully shady lane that runs north

between bordering elms. It is a most out of the way corner, and the weed-grown doorway and ill-kept churchyard have a sadly neglected look.[1] To the north lies Hatherden, a new little church marking its recent promotion to the dignity of being a parish, and an inn that was surely built for a picture, so cool its cream-washed irregular walls under the old thatch. But visions of "nut-brown" maids, "old October," and smock-frocked villagers gathered on the bench round the sheltering tree in front of the low-lintelled doorway, are dispelled by most modern letters that flaunt across its charming face the advice to drink somebody's strong ale. So the picture shares the fate of many a better and degenerates to an advertising poster.

The road continues up the valley to Tangley, but lanes that zigzag between rough hedges carry one over higher ground, and if the surface be uncertain and too much deserving the same qualification as the hedges, the distant peeps, and the clear bright air, are more than compensation. The hedges in early autumn days sway with the weight of ripening fruit as the breeze comes sweet over the stubble fields. Whirr! and a fine covey of little brown birds, all unconscious that the morn's hot sun ushered in the feast of St. Partridge, take wing and drop scattering in the field behind the corn-ricks. Whirr! again, and an old bird solemnly wings off in the same direction with a note that may be scornful challenge to the intruder, or warning to the impetuous young things first alarmed! From the north-west corner of a copse between Nutbane and Roundaway Farm the lane joins the Wiltshire border, but Wilts. is cut off from view most of the way by a grand old hedge, where bracken and brambles struggle for supremacy below the clumps of hazel, and the trailing wreaths of red- and yellow-berried briony dispute right of way on the overhanging oak and elm boughs with twists of honeysuckle, and the creamy flowers of the travellers' joy almost smother the purpling fruit of the elder. If you are not afoot you will find the surface of the lane leaves everything to be desired in the way of unpuncturable tyres and unsmashable springs, and for half a mile there are no distant views of either county, at any rate on a hot misty day in August or September. The land swells gently up and down, with far-reaching sweeps, timbered here and there, and quartered out

[1] Since writing the above I am informed a faculty has been obtained to remove the Church to Charlton.

by fine old hedges, mostly unspoilt by pruning. "Bad farming," the advocates of low, clipped hedgerow and wire fence may declare, but neither fields, farms, nor country folk look as if the badness was very vital!

Perched on the wooded spurs bordering one narrow valley cleft deep into the chalk hills is Tangley village, remote enough now even as byways go, but along-side what once was an important highway, for the great Roman road from Venta Belgarium to Corinium ran, ay! and runs to this day, from Hampshire Gate to Winchester City, broken only for half a mile to the north-west of Knight's Enham, where a path still follows the old route, and again from near Pavey's Farm east of Andover for a mile to Harewood Forest, and another mile over the snipe-beloved marshes of Test by Bransbury Common. Pavey's Farm, by the way, has, or had till quite recently, a legend that "Pavey walks." Now, everyone "walks" in Hampshire, though we do not confess it!—but Pavey has apparently a reason for his nocturnal unpleasantness, for if tales be true he was buried at the cross roads with a stake through his middle, sufficiently uncomfortable to account for his restlessness. Still who he was and what he did is sunk in oblivion from which only his ghost and name have escaped! From Hampshire Gate, about a mile north of Tangley, there is a fine panorama over western Hants, away to the Winchester Downs and hills by Stockbridge, sweeping on line upon line, up ridge after ridge, to their brothers in Wiltshire. To the river levels the land falls away, well-wooded for the most part, but the woods are interspersed with gold-brown stretches of cornland, down to the valleys of the Anton and Test. There is an air of satisfactory content over all the landscape of these wide open folds of the lower Downs, sun-kissed, rain-washed, wind-swept, year after year in endless cycle of growth from young green to gold, before the fields lie brown and fallow. A century may roll away with but little of change, and the quiet homeliness of the people accords with their country. Stolid? Maybe, and undemonstrative to a degree, yet a kindly and a simple folk the writer has invariably found them. But we wander too far from Tangley and its old road that cuts the parish in half.

In the little churchyard remains to this day what, if their history as well as their sermon—on the mutability of human greatness—could be read, might tell the tale of this wild region

in days before the Roman cut his way through forest and fen, three old grey sarsen stones, beside which the extremely fine yew is but a child of no age or standing. Whether or not, as some have suggested, a Druid circle stood on this shoulder of the Downs, certain it is that more of these stones once lay in the vicinity. Parson White recorded that he brought an "enormous Druidical stone" from Soper's Bottom in 1781 to build his *Kist Vaen* in the grove by his rectory at Fyfield, and Soper's Bottom is the country name for a broad grass track running nearly all the way from Appleshaw to Lower Chute. A well known local writer states that others were used hereabouts from time to time to mend the roadways.[1] *Sic transit!* Silchester builds Hodge his cottage, and Druid altars may pave his lanes. The small church of St. Thomas of Canterbury has been mostly rebuilt, but the little apse with its round arch and Norman windows, and the tile courses in the north wall are old work. There is a curious lead font—the Vicar told me only twenty-six others are known of in England.

As for the old raised causeway of the Romans, I have followed it from the broad tree-bordered road over Worthy Down, along the rough track hidden in Harewood's green recesses, or back from the Wiltshire border. In the main it is rough. But for three-quarters of a mile from Hampshire Gate the road has a fair surface, then modern traffic diverts to a newer line, though the old Roman way, grass-grown, shady, runs on between wild hedges. In places the surface is deeply rutted, and again piles of flints by the wayside give silent warning that its worn face is shortly to be renewed with a layer of that detestable material, or it may be are simply piled there as a handy space when gathered from the adjoining fields. It lies higher than the modern lanes and where the bed of the road is still raised enough, or the bordering bank or hedge sinks a trifle, commands better prospects over the country through gaps in the hedges, peeps of golden corn lands fringed with deep rows and copses of green trees, that stretch away to the broken line of hills grey-blue in the south-west.

Twisting, rough lanes lead north over the hill past Tangley Clumps to where in the upper valley of the Bourne lie the grey roofs of Upton. Wild enough this bit of country we have

[1] George A. B. Dewar.

heard the ignorant call Hampshire scenery "tame"! Scattered groups of fir, gorse bushes, and young undergrowth, and white chalk scars here and there break the green. Hither came the writer one evening from Andover, to watch the sunset lights over the Anna watershed. A corner in a stubble-field gave camping ground. There was nothing of the bold flanks sweeping up to the giants of the chalk Downs that lie on the northern side of the ridge, but a rich and very pleasant land lay outstretched below, changing with the failing light, till the rooks ceased weaving their aërial mesures up in the topaz sky and dropped to their swinging homes in the elm tops, the answering hoot of owl to owl came from the woods behind, and Night led a weary world gently through beyond the purple gates of sleep.

CHAPTER XIII

THE VALE OF ANNA

THE lungs of the defunct Londoner are popularly believed to consist mainly of soot; those of the dwellers by, or frequenters of, the highway to the west of Andover with equal reason must be loaded with chalk, for the road to Weyhill can be *the* dustiest in Hampshire, not excepting the sandy tracks round Aldershot. And this dust is not sand, but powdered chalk, in some ways the deadliest of the two. I have seen it a plastic mass of slime, such as only a chalk road can attain to, but best I know it under a coat eight inches deep of the finest, most insidious white powder. Only once had I a good word for it, to prove the old proverb anent an ill wind—in this case it was absence of wind, which caused the fine white dust to hang heavy on the air; it belched over the hedgerows exactly like a sea fog creeping up the coast levels, and, like the sea-mists again, held the light, so that the vale was cut in twain by a trail of rosy glory vanishing into the sunset. Certainly 1906 was a very dry season, but set against climatic vagaries the fact that Andover is one of the happiest hunting grounds in all Hampshire for Robert when on motor traps intent, and that no less than £1400 was extracted from the pockets of the motoring fraternity by the local authorities that year.

Weyhill village itself is a small one, or rather is no village at all, only a part of Penton Grafton. But Penton Grafton and Penton Mewsey though parochially distinct are practically one, and Weyhill, where the parish church of the former stands, has, from the immemorial notoriety of its fair, usurped an unauthorised identity. Be not deceived oh! owner of an Ordnance Survey map—inch scale—and, like the writer once,

go there under the impression it is of some extent! It was a stifling mid-summer noon, and tyre trouble that seemed to demand professional attention developed in the neighbourhood of Amport. Andover could supply it but Weyhill was nearer, and surely those orderly rows of black lines meant shops! The tyre lasted till Weyhill was reached—desolate, shopless—then, as is the way of tyres, collapsed utterly. Many times since have I passed the famous fair ground, but the sultry hours that followed in the backyard of an inn on my first arrival left impression more lasting than ever the rows of empty booths on the bare grassy hill where the thistle down drifts in the summer winds, the blizzards of fairyland, and fate has never yet taken me to the vicinity in fair time.

The name of Grafton is said to be a corruption of Grestein, the manor having been given to the Abbey of St. Mary, Grestein, by the Conqueror on the death of the Confessor's widow, Queen Edith, who held Penton amongst other Hampshire manors. Clanville, the adjoining manor, part of the great de Port lordship, also came to the alien priory. Penton Mewsey, which adjoins Penton Grafton, is hidden among its elms and chestnuts in a fold of the open downland. The village straggles along two roads and round a rough square, a collection of farmyards with big thatched or tiled barns, chalk walls with red and brown tile-bonnets. Most of the cottages are half buried under Virginia creeper, so that the little place is a feast of colour as the year grows old; gayer, if not more beautiful, than in its youth, when the chestnuts lift their creamy cones, pink-splashed, above the pendant green fans of their leaves. There is no trace of the old church which stood here when Domesday Book was compiled, and little of the one which the present building replaced, but the bell turret is said to be almost unique, and there is some good Decorated work yet left in the windows. Winding lanes with uncertain surface, and ofttimes many small, sharp flints, lead up to the high lands, old byways cut down to the main road, and a mile to the west a lane runs to the Wiltshire border by Ramridge House and Clanville, another village hidden in a pucker of the Downs. Ramridge has been noted since the days of the third Edward for the fine timber in its park, and the venerable trees all about this neighbourhood to-day keep the old reputation as green as their own foliage! Just beyond the cross-

roads at Duck Street runs the county border, and a road, of the three-ruts-in-the-grass kind, follows it, with one zigzag away to the south, for some two miles to another cross road by a delightful clump of beeches, hollies and fir. Beyond is Wiltshire, into which the road crosses till it once more marks the boundary where the railway line and highway cut it and pass on to Ludgershall. For me Hampshire holds few greater pleasures than such rough tracks offer, leading down between hedges that meet overhead, where the scent of massed hawthorn blossom in spring is even more overpowering than the opulent fragrance of the wild clematis on a sultry August afternoon, so remote from the bustle of the present—the most you see at first down this lane through gaps in the hedges is the wall of elms round Clanville House, or the woods that hide Redenham. The very tick of a watch is incongruous, and the throbbing of a motor's engines is an impertinence. Let alone the thorny questions of "steam tactics" cross-country drives, to extract the true pleasure from these lanes you should go on foot, either your own or a trusty nag's. They are not to be hurried over, they invite you to saunter,—their surface, for that matter, rarely permits of excessive speed!—and, for the most part, they are shady enough to be very alluring on a summer day when the dusty white main roads would be unendurable. Moreover, these old hedges have an interest and delight apart from their shade; they are like strips of the undergrowth left when the land was cleared more than the orthodox clipped thorn fence, and doubtless so they are, old strips of Chute Forest. Once I counted over a dozen different trees and bushes in this very hedge, and there were probably others unseen or unrecognised; and creepers and hedgerow plants, honeysuckle and clematis fling their scented festoons everywhere, for plant and animal life alike find undisturbed harbourage. Nearing the corner where the lane from Redenham crosses into the grounds of Chute Lodge the road surface improves, it has been metalled within the memory of man! But to balance this concession to modern methods, the hedges have been lopped of much of their pristine glories. Here a scrap of old hedge is left, there a complete clearing, and even a bit of it layered. The only consolation is it admits of a view over the cornfields to the woods of Ramridge and Redenham, and the Wiltshire Downs rise on the horizon beyond the

rounded wood-capped crown of Quarley and the long chain of hills running up to Tedworth. Further on, as the lane twists downhill towards Biddenden House, the fine old hedges meet again between road and sky, a bounteous green tunnel of sun-flecked shade, where the only sound on a hot still day is the coo of a woodpigeon, or the rustling scamper of a field mouse. The track sweeps sharply down to the main road by the entrance to Biddesden House, which was built by Maj.-Gen. Webb, the victor of Wynendael.

The road from Biddesden Gate for the next two miles southwards is one of the most charming in the whole Anna country. When the Biddesden House plantations of silver birch, Spanish laurel, a fine cedar, and chestnuts amid ash, beech and oak, are passed, an excellent and almost level road leads back to Weyhill by Redenham and Appleshaw, with wide grassy verge, old hedges and bordering elm trees. The same beautiful hedgerows divide the pasture lands, and the villages are equally delightful, with long and low cottages under heavy thatch among the fine elms. At Appleshaw the grass border broadens to a wide turfed walk under avenues of great walnut trees, with beech and elm beyond. After such charms the sight of a wired fence and newly-built cottage seem—as even Hampshire cannot be quite perfect!—the only-to-be-expected end of this old-world dream; but no, still elms and another timber-framed cottage, with quaint old chimney running up its face, between the windows and above the thatch. The Iron Pear Tree is quite a fitting inn sign for such a village, and further on another inn bears the old name of the Cleaver.

And yonder to the west lie Tedworth and Ludgershall, but hardly the Tedworth and Ludgershall of old story and romaunt. If they have not been entirely engulfed in the voracious maw of the Molech utility—which in this case is concerned with war, and therefore devastation is quite in the fitness of things—they are vanishing daily, and it will not be long before impressionist paragraphist and ill-informed sightseer may be bemoaning here, as they now do at Woolmer, the ruin wrought in the "beautiful country" by that Aunt Sally for experimenting politicians and armchair critics, the poor little British Army! Woolmer shall make its own apology. As for the Tedworth Downs—well, come and see them in their nakedness while Tedworth Camp is yet in its initial stage of

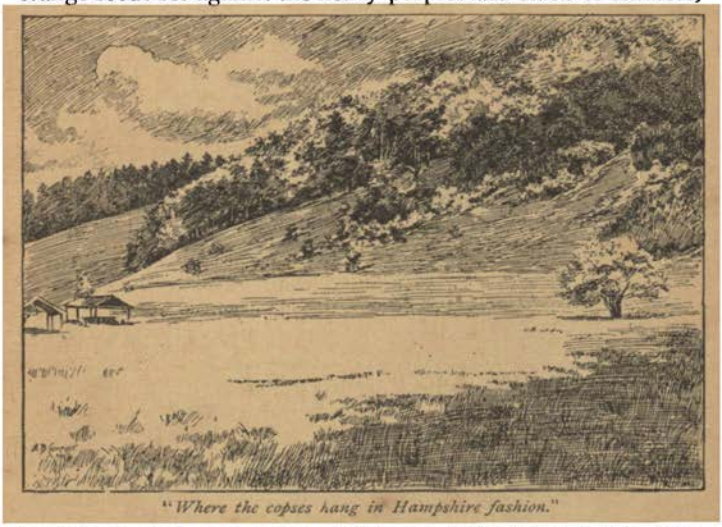
unredeemed ugliness, whilst everything is so new that the "spoiling" process may be marked from its inception! But observe, the downs are bare and bleak as the lines of the camp itself. Before the days of that grand old fox hunter Assheton Smith the country was wilder yet, if more wooded, for all this neighbourhood owed much to his enthusiastic labours, not exactly with a single eye to the beautiful certainly, but to promote the sport he so delighted in. An excellent, if dusty, road runs from Weyhill to Ludgershall, alongside the rail for the most part. The country opens out with broader stretches of cornland, broken, once the woods of Redenham House are passed, by but little timber. It is a very barren looking corner of Wiltshire that the road runs through by Ludgershall and Tedworth and back over the Hampshire border that once halved the latter village, now entirely given over to Wilts. The tin-hutted camp is as ugly as camp can manage to be, and Tedworth valley is blocked with brick, slate *and* barbed wire, while the few old houses that once were Hampshire's are for the most part lost in the desert of red brick that has arisen in the last six years. If there was little in the scenery of the surrounding country to spoil, the coming of the camps has notably affected this quiet village, "the model village"[1] is no more.

But all this time we trespass in Wiltshire, according to the latest boundary regulations, so let us back within our border again, where the copses hang in Hampshire fashion on the brow of Warren Hill and Ashdown, and the velvety grass sweeps up, in broken waves of shot-green and brown, above a good road to Shipton Bellinger, where there is nothing but the stone screen in its church to detain us, passing more tin huts and boards placarded OUT OF BOUNDS, as indeed we are, if the Anna watershed be our theme, for here we have crossed to the slopes that feed the Bourne which joins the Avon.

The irregular ridge of hills that form this water-parting round off the vale of Anna on the west. Between this ridge and the lesser one that carries the road through Ludgershall to Marlborough spreads the green valley of the little Ann or Pillhill Brook. The winding streamlet runs south and west to the Anton, here smothered under a thicket of willow herb, wild sage, and green water-plants, there rippling from a miniature forest of broad-leaved sedge and bronzy reeds to purl over its

[1] "Nimrod" on Tedworth and Assheton Smith.

clean chalk bed through rich meadow-grasses, run with a gurgle under the diminutive arches of low brick bridges, broaden into pools and shallows by a ford, or cut a maze of intertangling channels, as is the way of her chalk streams all Hampshire over. Twisting lanes lead by copse and hedgerow, a glory of blossom in spring that the miracle of the circling seasons shall turn with the passing summer to rich feast of berries, masses of waxy red haws, shiny orange and scarlet of bryony, or the dainty coral beauty of the spindle with its contrasting orange seeds set against the heavy purples and black of bramble,



"Where the copses hang in Hampshire fashion."

buckthorn, sloe, and privet. Cottages, half timber, brick, flint, plastered, with small-paned windows peeping under thatched or tiled eaves out of wreathing creepers, hide in gardens of old fashioned flowers, sweet and colourful. The scenery is England's own, and the story of one village that of all her country settlements. Back into the days of Saxon Wessex run their records, a list of high-born owners, a momentary share, maybe, in the pageant of the nation's history, and the small chronicle of local life, birth, marriage, death, that the grey churches silently attest. The first three villages, Kimpton, Fyfield, and Thruxton, lie in a triangle within a mile of each

other, just off the main road from Andover to Salisbury. Kimpton, the remotest of the group, has Early English work and lancet windows in its church, despite its unpromising tower, built of red brick to match the Lodge, in 1837, with the result that the group of buildings—the church is in the Lodge grounds—resemble the works of a city water company put in this rural corner by some such freakish imp as caused the Hongkong barracks to be set up at Gosport—or are sappers the only builders who prove their humanity by erring thuswise? *Pace!* That tale is allowable by reason of its hoary age. Probably a similar yarn was told by the old knight whose effigy in armour is on an early sixteenth-century brass on the wall above an altar tomb, with black-letter inscription that begs you "Off yᵉ cherite pray for the foule of Robert Thornburgh, eſquyer." The Thornboroughs owned Shoddesden Manor, once part of the dower of Edith, last of the Saxon queens.

Fyfield, with its quaint little church tucked away in the fields down a shady walk by a big farmyard, is less remembered as a manor given to the Abbey of Hyde by Queen Emma than from its association with Gilbert White, for the "musical friend" who, he wrote to Daines Barrington, "has tried all the owls that are his near neighbours with a pitch-pipe set at concert pitch and finds they all hoot in B flat,"[1] was his brother. Henry White held the living till his death, and in the register of the neighbouring parish of Monkston is the entry of Henry White's marriage with Christian St. Barbe. Mr. White and others of his family lie in the little churchyard. His diaries, partly published,[2] fill up the details of the picture of old-time every-day life in this quiet corner most delightfully: how the stores were replenished at Weyhill Fair in the days when shops were few and far away, or when a "team came from Southampton and brt. pipe of port wine from Mr. Ballard, 27 lbs. of coals, 1 sack of salt, 2 doz. and ½ of whitings, 200 oysters," and so forth, a queer consignment! Later, the pipe of port is noted as being bottled, when

"it ran 56 doz. exactly and 4 bottles and 1 of thick, all done in excellent order and without any accident till 30 doz. bottles were danced over and 2 doz. and ½ broke by a drunken beast from Andover.

'*Monstrum horrendum*
—unctos saliere perlitres'"

[1] Letter ix. [2] Clutterbuck, *Fyfield and the Villages Adjacent.*

concludes the worthy Vicar. Then he comments on the surrounding houses—Ramridge, "a very large and expensive house and too lofty for the country"; Conholt Park, with "the most lovely scenery and evergreens possible to be imagined"; Hurstbourne Park, "a vast enormous pile, strong building, very little ornamented, on a bleak, uncouth and uncomfortable situation, but ye Apartments spacious and magnificent"—this was the house that was burnt down in 1891, not the present one; Wilbury House, "a very beautiful spot and elegantly planted . . . delightful shady lawn close behind." He records dinners and parties with more than once a doleful entry, "whist instead of music, dreadful alternative. Alas! alas!! alas!!!" Lucky Parson that he lived not in the days of *Bridge!*

Although doubtless helped in his clerical work by the masters who assisted in teaching his pupils, for he turned the old Vicarage into a private school, the musical Vicar's post was no sinecure, for numerous entries note the bad state of roads and the distances he went every Sunday to fulfil his many duties, *per ex*:—"Served 4 churches, Ludgershall, 2 Tidw^{ths} and Fyfield," and again, "Served Kimpton and Fyfield a.m., Ludgershall and N. Tidwth p.m.," "Very stormy ride to Tidwth . . . ret^{d} home rather wet." Also, as we expect from a brother of Gilbert White, there are notes on natural history, the weather, entries of vipers killed, ravens seen, bustards on the Wiltshire Downs, truffles collected, and so forth. In 1781 "great heat" is noted—83°. This entry raised a smile when the writer visited Fyfield one hot, dry summer, for that very morning they had declared at Andover the mercury touched 96° in the shade—I have no note of the official reading—and a villager hearing thereof remarked grimly, "Thermometer were lucky to find any shade"!

Thruxton at the Domesday survey was held by Goseline de Cornelies, and in Plantagenet times was important enough to have a fair granted by charter. The church, with feathery clusters of a dainty clematis wreathing the wires set to protect south wall and windows, has its story writ in its own stones of Norman, Decorated, and Perpendicular work. The churchyard is beautifully kept and planted with ornamental trees, shrubs, and flowers, while the pedestal of a small sundial rises from the smooth clipped turf.

From London Hill, the rise immediately south of the village, one gets a view of the hilly borderland, but for a really fine outlook continue along the main road up to the crest of Thruxton Hill. The road sweeps down—its surface somewhat uncertain—and up again over the serrated line of Wiltshire hills to Amesbury. It is good to lie prone on the dry brown grass, over which the falling light throws a russet glory, and watch night close down, and her white counterpane of mist fold over the valleys, as the fires of the western sky fade to a luminous glow behind the ridge of Wiltshire's Beacon, that shuts out Bulford and its camp, and to listen to the cock pheasant's evening challenge ringing out from coppice and spinney above the sleepy drone of the wood-pigeons; then in the darkling twilight of a summer's eve to swing back to Weyhill and along the dusty white road to Andover, when the moon rising red through the haze looks like a Japanese lantern hung on the telegraph wires. Good is it, also, on a clear autumn day to climb through the scattered gorse bushes to the clump of beeches by the earthworks of the Roman camp that ring the crest of Quarley Hill. The hill stands out as conspicuous in its immediate vicinity as it does in distant views—a rounded kopje, landmark unmistakable. Vale and hill, copse dotted, stretch away, long grassy ridge rolls on to grassy ridge, or rises to a tree crowned cone as at Danesbury to the south-east, and on either side lie the watersheds of Wallop and Anton leading to the rich valley lands by Test.

Quarley village lies a mile to the north of the hill. Most of the Norman work has been restored away in the little church. Its old bells hang sadly on a wooden frame, and almost touch the grass below the rotting, moss-grown boards that make no pretence to shelter the stained green metal. To the west are the woods of Amport House, the seat of that old Hampshire family the Paulets. But though Amport has come down to them from the days when it got its name by being the manor of Ann held by de Port, the house is a recent structure. The little village borders the road by the north-east corner of the grounds, and the church stands back among the trees by the roadway running to the north-west. It is impressive by reason of its simplicity, or so it seemed to the writer, but the feature most often noted is the tracery of its chancel windows—flamboyant. Swallows tenanted the small building when I visited

it, and heeded an intruder as little as though they were the rightful possessors. Bees in Hampshire churches are too ordinary to note; I have seen the seats strewn with their bodies, and the walls and rafters stained from probably generations of swarms that had harboured under the tiles. The south transept, as the Winchester family pew, contains many memorials of bygone Paulets, though the greatest monument to the family who bear *Aimez Loyauté* for motto must ever be the mounds and ruins of Basing House.

Monkston, gathering on either side the valley where the little Pillhill bubbles through green meadows, is quite the

A Monkston byway.

prettiest village of the group. "Gozeline held Anne of the King, and Saxi held it allodially of King Edward." It was probably then what it is now, a small agricultural community. When Anne de Bec, passed from the alien Priory, this manor was given by Henry VI to his Cambridge College. In the muniment room at King's are many records of Monkston—the *x* now officially affected for its spelling is as modern as it is ugly and reasonless. The old church, according to a record of 1749, "like most in this country is very small, and is a mean building"; it is said to have been built about the middle of the thirteenth century, and by the eighteenth was, as the parish accounts

show, in continual need of repairs. In 1852 it was rebuilt, and only the pillars of the old chancel arch remain. The early parish books have one or two most curious entries that, brief though they be, open a vista of forgotten sufferings, and show how even these unfrequented corners came in touch with wider vicissitudes of life and distant terrors:—"Gave a parsel of slaves that came from turkey 1*s.* o*d.*"; this was July, 1730; next year, "Gave a man that had been a slave in turkey and had his tung cut out 1*s.* o*d.*," and in 1733 more "turkey slaves"—they had five shillings that time; in 1745 "Wounded seamen, late Spanish prisoners," is reminder of the ineffective maritime war we waged with the ally of France. One entry deserves quoting in full as a "hôrrible warning" to all hypochondriacs! —

"Henry Skeat was not sick, but thinking Himself too full of Blood (April: ye xith) was let blood, and in 4 or 5 minnits, after his Arm was ty'd up, after he had bled about 10 ounces, expir'd. Aged 25 years."

From 1723 to 1748 Monkston had a "most whimsical and singular" rector. He would sit alone in the parlour, to which none of his family were permitted entry; he dined and supped in solitude, and occupied himself—

"with figures and Algebra, to which study he was so devoted, that for many of the last years of his life he stirred not out of his house, no, not even to Church, but had a constant Curate though the Church is not a stone's throw from the Rectory, and gave himself not time to be shaved, but let his beard grow till he was a spectacle, and in his dress as particular, so that by this way of life he brought himself into an ill Habit of which he died, fr which however he might have recovered even at the last as his Physitian told him, if he would have been at the trouble and taken moderate exercise, which he had taken into his head would kill him directly. He was son of James Rothwell of Colvey near Farnham in Hampshire assistant surgeon of the ordnance to King James 2nd."

By an odd coincidence Dr. Apthorpe, his successor, was another mathematical enthusiast, and would jot down problems on any stray bit of paper, card, or even a book were it handy; but the dishevelled ghost that haunts the old parlour is without doubt that Senior Fellow of King's the Reverend Thomas Rothwell, LL.D.!

Abbots Ann, last of the villages by the winding Pill, though pretty enough, might pass without comment were it not for a funeral custom, quaint and homely, that has survived here till

it is like to go down to posterity as "of Abbots Ann," though a hundred years ago some score of other places had record or lingering relic of similar doings. Gilbert White in his *Antiquities* recalls how in Selborne church he could—

> remember when its beams were hung with garlands in honour of young women of the parish, reputed to have died virgins: and recollect to have seen the clerk's wife cutting, in white paper, the resemblances of gloves, and ribbons to be twisted in knots and roses, to decorate these memorials of charity. In the Church of Farringdon, which is the next parish, many garlands of this sort still remain.[1]

This "delicate and beautiful rite," as Washington Irving calls it in his *Sketch Book*, has died out at Selborne and Farringdon, nor, to the best of my belief, is there record of it elsewhere after the middle of last century; but here the latest garland was placed within this decade. Moreover, what is uncommon, the garlands are not bestowed on maidens only, but on all who die unmarried, "wearing the white flower of a blameless life."

The church was built by the Pitt who gave his name to the famous diamond and was himself thereafter "Diamond Pitt." It is entirely without interest other than the funeral garlands, pendant from the small shields that bear name and date for each.

[1] Letter iii

CHAPTER XIV

SOUTH TO STOCKBRIDGE.

" The far green westward heavens are bland
The far green Wiltshire downs are clear
As these deep meadows hard at hand."
SWINBURNE.—*Heartsease Country.*

WIDE stretches of lonely country, rolling expanse of grassy down broken by dark woods, or long strips of coppice beside a roadway, and the greenest of green valleys where the Test and her tributaries wind through marsh and meadow: such is the country that lies between Central Hants and the Wiltshire border, a country intersected by road and rail, yet that retains much of the peaceful charm of old-world days when rush and bustle seem to have been words without meaning, in comparison with what they represent to-day! But it was never remote from beaten tracks, and even before the coming of the Iron Horse valley and down were cut through and across by important highways; roads from Salisbury to Winchester and Andover, and the old Roman causeway from Cirencester to Winchester meeting at right angles in the green heart of the downlands the coach road from Basingstoke to Stockbridge, a road that from Sutton Scotney to Woolbury is as undeviating as the most correctly Roman road in the county.

From Woolbury Ring one may get a wonderful panorama over all this green country and the valley of beautiful Test, which of all our colourful corners possibly stands first, as certainly it does for variety of scenery. Even at midsummer the wealth of colour is indescribable. Spring displays hues of a fresh beauty and clearness that excel even the rich colouring when autumn turns the greens and yellows of down and cornfield to

opulent bronze and gold, when the beeches exchange their deep greens for shimmering copper tints, and the elms flaunt every yellow against the red and brown of maple and oak. Wild flowers are everywhere, the deep hedges are buried in blossom each May, and burdened with berries by September. As for the water-meadows in the valleys, and the wild stretches of swamp or common through which the clear chalk streams twist in and out among their flowery borders, filter through beds of willow-herb and reed-mace, are lost under a tangle of sedge and sallow, divide into a dozen rills and channels, unite and broaden into wide and shallow lakes with a hundred reedy islands, as the wayward currents will, they have charms unending to those who find their pleasure in the wild life of Nature's gardens.

There is choice, therefore, for diverse tastes and fancies hereabouts—history and archæology, sport and scenery. The flower lover may revel in the wealth of blossom and seek on the Downs that stretch towards Winchester for many a treasure. There is the rare round-headed rampion; the writer found some growing by the road over Worthy Down, and in the same neighbourhood were the burnt orchis, the broad-leaved and white helleborines, the beautiful butterfly orchis, and over a dozen others of that quaint and delightful tribe. There are orchis in the valleys also, the spider, a variety of the marsh, and the sweet scented, besides less uncommon beauties in the wet meadows and by the riverside, where water-fowl nest in the sedges, and the gay yellow iris and great masses of glorious mimulus succeed the golden marsh marigolds and exquisite pink and white blossoms of the buckbean by the forget-me-nots in every hollow and along every ditch. Here in springtime the weird drone of the drumming snipe rings over the swamp where his mate sits on her grass-lined nest in some dry reed tuft, while swifts and swallows rival his "flightsmanship" as they wheel and dart with dizzying ceaselessness, and the sedge warblers vie with the lark and both are beaten in persistency by the cuckoo!

One of the most alluring spots in all this valley is the pretty village of Longparish, where lived another of Hampshire's notable sportsmen, Col. Peter Hawker, author of that classic work *Instructions to Young Sportsmen*. The village is scattered along the road that follows the river-way to Stockbridge. The church dates from early twelfth-century days, with Decorated and Perpendicular additions, and has been well restored. The

hour-glass in a niche of the pillar by the pulpit is reminder of the days when clocks were almost unknown and time was measured, not only by cooks and cottagers, but the learned also, by means of glasses calculated for varying periods from thirty minutes to twelve hours. But it is the river and its scenery that is most attractive here, and one of the most delightful reaches of the river lies below a lane that runs from Longparish and turns right and left by the river bank to Bransbury and over a swell of the downland by Tufton to Whitchurch. Tufton is little more than a hamlet, but its small church, with dumpy, shingled bell turret, dates from Norman times and has an old painting of St. Christopher on the north wall of the nave. Tufton was the starting-point of a run that the Vine long held historic. They found their fox in the osier beds by the river, ran through Hurstbourne Park and Harewood, and in less than an hour and a half had killed in the open south of Abbotts Ann, more than ten miles west as the crow flies, "every hound up, but not so the field," the recorder comments. But the peaceful water meadows are connected with brothers of the angle and their gentle art rather than with Venator and his merry scoffers thereat. The lane crosses the river by a bridge that has often tempted me to linger when the whirr of a Nottingham reel came from the riverside, blent not unmusically with the distant hum of its big brother at Paper Mill Farm, and the tinkle of a sheep-bell from the fields behind. Swiftly the clear water glides over the bed of waving water weeds; a flight of duck breaks from the reeds in the upper reach; here, there, everywhere, as the interlacing circles show, trout are rising for their evening meal. Whurr! Whurrrr! Someone is having good sport down there behind those grey-green willows by the clump of tall poplars where the river bends. Plump. Splash! Fancy suggests a whopper, a very grandfather of trouts is rising yonder by that pollarded willow—or was it a water rat? Trout do not run to any great size in the upper waters of the Test, judging from those of my acquaintance. Our introduction usually takes place at the breakfast table! For records of monster trout one must wait till Romsey is reached; though between Longparish and Stockbridge they run up to three pounds and over. But the strictly preserved Test fishing is too well known to need comment, suffice it that, in the words of a local writer, "'Veish is the curiosest things as is'—and,

like all unfathomable things, endowed with an irresistible and unfailing charm."[1]

Beyond Longparish, close to the station on the Fullerton and Hurstbourne line, the road from Andover through Harewood Forest crosses the wandering Test by two bridges, and runs on —with a bad reputation for tyre-cutting flints—to Popham Beacon. By it lies the old British earthwork known as the Van or An Dyke. Elder and blackthorn bushes grow above the close green turf on the banks of what the ordnance map simply calls "Intrenchment," thereby evading all controversy as to its British or Roman origin, for intrenchment of some sort, the old Andyke or Andytch obviously was. It commands the green and peaceful valley down which the stream from the many springs at Micheldever runs to join the Test at Bransbury, a distance of six miles as the crow flies and with as many villages clustered in its shelter. If their history has few or no dramatic pages, it reaches back to far forgotten centuries. Micheldever itself has the most modern air of all; but it has very ancient memories none the less. Many Saxon relics have been found in the vicinity, while at Norsbury Ring is a pre-Roman camp. The church was rebuilt a hundred years ago, but the Perpendicular tower fortunately was left untouched. The octagonal building more resembles the pump room at some of the inland watering-places to which the fashionable world then flocked than a village church.

Two roads lead westwards under the ugly railway embankment that cuts the village off from the valley, and a mile beyond, on the south bank of the stream, is Stoke Charity, a small and pretty village with some black and white cottages and a church of great interest. Visitors owe much gratitude to the parochial authorities who have hung on boards by the door printed accounts of the history of the old church and manor from the days when the Saxon church stood here. The exterior, these state, has been rebuilt, but possibly some of the original building remains within at the east end of the north aisle, where a plain chamfered arch leads into the vestry, and the nave has two bays of low, solid Norman work with short octagonal pillars, and Norman moulding over the chancel arch. The fifteenth-century chantry chapel is full of broken

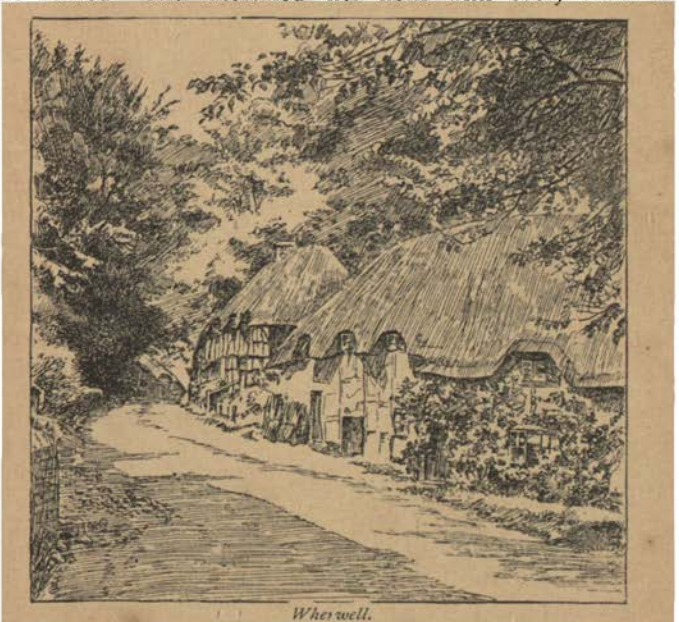
[1] Marie Hawker. *Old Hampshire Vignettes.*

stonework and tombs of dead and gone Hamptons and Wallers. During restorations about sixty years ago an old sculpture was discovered in the wall by the south window. It is said to be fifteenth- or sixteenth-century work and represents "St. Gregory's Pity," the miraculous appearance of the Christ at mass. It is now in the Waller chapel. In 1737 Sir William Heathcote bought the manor, and so it comes to pass that the pews and the shingles on the spire are of Hursley oak. The bells are inscribed, "*Sancta Catarina ora pro nobis*; *Sancta Trinitas ora pro nobis*; God be our Guide, $16\frac{14}{15}$." Outside by the south wall is the tomb of the Rev. Joshua Reynolds, uncle and godfather of the famous painter.

At Sutton Scotney, now notably popular with motor-trapping policemen, lanes and high-roads meet, and the wide spaces by the comfortable looking inns mark its popularity in coaching days. The river here bends north to Bullington before resuming its westerly course, with a loop away from the road between Bullington and Barton Stacey. All Saints at Barton Stacey is a fine cruciform Early English building. The square tower, with its grey pinnacles, battlements, and turret at the south angle, was built in the fifteenth century, according to the parochial account placed in the porch here also. The transepts start from the chancel arch, so its two pillars support four arches, which gives a singularly light effect, to which the massive supports of the tower at the west end are curious contrast. The rood loft has gone, but part of the stairway remains. A green hill rises to the west and beyond lie the wild spaces of Bransbury Common, a sanctuary for wild life, where the naturalist may hap on many a rare trove. To the south, tucked away at the foot of a hill, under fine and shady trees by the Stockbridge road on the further bank of the Test, is the charming village of Wherwell, with demure looking cottages, thatched and plastered, and very gay gardens.

Names, we know and have seen, cling to localities from age to age; but a new factor has arisen that may go very far to puzzle the philologists of a thousand years hence. Of old names came down by oral transmission. The spread of so-called education is changing this. Wherwell has been "Horrel" —when the H was not obliterated!—but W-h-e-r-w-e-l-l spells "Wurwel" to the rising generation and here, as in many another village, the old folk and their traditional lore are

scorned by the ill-lettered, "educated" juveniles. Moreover, there is controversy over the origin of the name. Some would have it that the derivation was from its hoar or ancient springs. The other definition is based on the sequel to the story of Dead Man's Plack. Elfrida "declining from her regal pride, became extremely penitent," William of Malmesbury tells, and founded as a compensatory act an Abbey at Wherwell to which she retired "and mortified her flesh with every kind of



Wherwell.

penance. She was a beautiful woman; singularly faithful to her husband." One almost suspects the good monk of sarcasm in the penning of that line! So in the Abbey near where husband number one had been murdered, Elfrida, like the jackdaw of Rheims, "at last in the odour of sanctity died." The fourteenth-century chartulary of the Abbey more than once mentions it was founded in the place "which by the inhabitants is called Wherwell," which goes to prove the name existed before the royal sinner had aught to do with it, and only the

similarity of sound suggested to subsequent generations the popular explanation of "Whorewell." The first story of this place is given by Dugdale on the authority of John of Tinmouth, and tells how the maiden Wlfhilda was inveigled from her nunnery at Wilton on a visit to Wenfleda, Edgar's aunt, at "her house at Warewell" at the king's instigation. Royal robes and feasting did not incline the damsel favourably to the suit of the profligate king, and when soldiers were placed on guard at her door she escaped "through the passage of the drain, and in the vill of Wherwell she was entertained as a beggar in the hovel of a certain very poor woman." The treacherous Wenfleda would seem to have left her manor to her nephew, and thus it passed to his widow and thereafter became ecclesiastical property, confirmed to the Church by a charter from Ethelred in 1002.

Quiet, sleepy, little village as Wherwell looks to-day, in the time of the Saxon kings and till the destruction of the Abbey it was a place of no small importance. Here came many a lady of noble birth and, according to tradition, at least four of the Saxon queens. Up to the fourteenth century Wherwell was fortunate in its abbesses, and the writer of the chartulary waxes especially eloquent over the good deeds of the Abbess Euphemia. Although we are fully assured of her sweetness and piety, "she seemed to have the spirit of a man rather than a woman" and did much to improve and restore the Abbey properties. She built a chapel to the Virgin, and the Manor houses of Middleton and Tufton, "disfigured by old and crumbling buildings," were removed to new sites, and "permanent buildings, new and strong . . . of greater service and safer against the danger of fire" were erected:—

"She also, with maternal piety and careful forethought, built, for the use of both sick and sound, a new and large farmery away from the main buildings, and in conjunction with it a dorter and other necessary offices. Beneath the farmery she constructed a watercourse, through which a stream flowed with sufficient force to carry off all refuse that might corrupt the air . . . . .

. . . realising that the Lord had called her to the rule of the Abbey of Wherwell, not that she might live there at ease, but that she might, with due care and despatch, uproot and destroy and dissipate all that was noxious, and establish and erect that which would be useful."

Such conduct deserved no less than miracles, and one was vouchsafed. The bell-tower above the dorter fell:—

"about the hour of matins, when by an obvious miracle from heaven, though the nuns were at that moment in the dorter, some in bed and some in prayer before their beds, all escaped not only death but even any bodily injury."

When the presbytery was found to be in danger of collapse, for the foundations were faulty and the soil damp, "having invoked the grace of the Holy Spirit, with prayers and tears she laid with her own hands the first stone of the foundations" of a new building. A notable woman.

Within a century the laxity of the times had borne fruit here also and we find a very different story. Bishop Pontoise commented on the quarrels of the nuns, the need of silence, and the lack of discipline. William of Wykeham, to avoid cause for gossip and scandal, forbade that friars or any man, lay and cleric alike, should be given a night's lodging. The story of the abduction of a nun suggests this order was not unneeded. At the dissolution the Abbey was granted to Lord de la Warre, and now hardly a stone of the old building can be found. But if the Abbey has gone many a tale and legend linger in the vicinage: stories of ghostly happenings, nuns' faces seen at a window of the Rectory at Chilbolton on the further bank of the Test, secret underground passages said to exist and connect Chilbolton with the Abbey grounds. A branch of the river still passes under the Priory which has superseded the old Abbey buildings, as it did when the Abbess Euphemia made her salutary reforms. These drains, by the way, probably were the origin of the secret passage stories. One curious survival has only ceased of recent years with the death of an old woman at Chilbolton, who possessed a pair of wafering-irons. There is said to have been at Leckford and Chilbolton a variety of the simnel cakes and Mothering Sunday customs of other places, wafers being sent in place of cakes; and certainly Mrs. Baverstock, the defunct owner of the wafering-irons, did make and sell wafers at mid-Lent.

Chilbolton Church, an inscription over the vestry door records, was restored in 1893, the "fabric being in a dangerous condition." It has Early English and Decorated work, and under the plaster above the chancel arch remains of old mural paintings were found, and a Norman clerestory window. There is some fine fifteenth-century linen-pattern oak carving in screen, pulpit and lectern. The manor was given to St.

Swithun's Priory by Athelstan, to commemorate the victory of Guy of Warwick over the Danish giant, it is said. Leckford, another village of old houses, further down the valley, has a thirteenth-century church with most primitive walls of mud and flints, and a squat wooden belfry above the lichen-stained tiles. The black marble font is two centuries older.

Between the two villages by Testcombe Bridge is the junction of the railways from Andover and Hurstbourne, and the roads meet just above where the waters of the Anton pass by a mill to join the Test. The Andover road continues over West

Leckford.

Down to the cross-roads by the White Hart Inn on the Sutton Scotney highway, but good lanes run on either side of the narrow Test valley to Stockbridge. That on the west turns through the grounds of Longstock House, on the slope of Hazel Down, and rounding Cleave Hill drops to the village of Longstock just opposite Leckford. The old chalk-walled church has gone, but one or two mementos remain in the new building: a Purbeck stone coffin lid, the old clerk's desk with the pulpit lights screwed on it, and some stonework from an earlier church of which no history is known, though the encaustic tiles by the altar are probably of thirteenth-

century date. In the chancel is the ledger stone of a former vicar, the Rev. Henry Arnold. The original epitaph ran, "Few equalled none excelled him," but these words were erased, possibly because they hurt the feelings of his successor!

Alongside the church a lane runs up to Danebury, getting narrower and rougher till it dwindles to a grassy track. This byway, which can be traced on the further side of the valley, is said to be an old trackway between the British camps on Danebury and Woolbury. The fosse and vallum of the first are of such size and extent as to prove it must have been of great importance in the eyes of the Early Men who made the massive earthworks. A sense of great age is on all the country hereabouts, and though the railway lies but half a mile away in the valley, change comes slowly to these villages and homesteads of the green downland, and old customs elsewhere forgotten or neglected are still observed in cottage and farmhouse. If the May Day revels have a flavour of official organisation that is in danger of defeating its own ends by turning a treat into a task, you may find farms where the Harvest Home is kept with due form and ceremony, not only as a church festival for the godly and righteous of the community, but with supper and song for all who have laboured in the harvest fields. The ploughman sings a ploughing song as he guides his team down the furrows, and as old country songs are rare enough treasures nowadays to claim a space when found whatever the demand on pages, I give the words of a local ploughing song as it reached me from a cottager in this neighbourhood:—

'Up steps the Master
With a smiling look,
'It's time to unyoke bring your horses in
And rub them down well
And you shall have a mug of my
Bonny brown ale.'

Up steps the Carter
To the Master, 'I vow
We've all ploughed our acre
I swear and I vow,
We're all jolly fellows that
Follow your plough.'

Out came the Master
With his scornful look

'You've not ploughed your acre!
I swear and I vow
You're all damned lazy fellows
That follow my plough.'"

There is a delightful inconsequence as regards rules of rhyme and rhythm, but that, an't please ye, marks it as the genuine article and not a sample vamped up in a study! A very old favourite at the Harvest Home suppers is a variant of the well known "Derby Ram." The local song begins:—

"I went to Derby market, sir,
'Twas on a market day,
And I saw the biggest ram, sir,
That was ever fed on hay!
That's a lie, a lie, a lie, sir,
Fol-di-rol, diddle-lo-dey!

That ram he had two eyes, sir,
Two eyes, you understand,
And in between his eyes, sir,
The parson used to stand.
That's a lie, a lie, a lie, sir,
Fol-di-rol, diddle-lo-dey!"

Though summer droughts had stolen the colours from the Downs, paled the blue distance to hazy grey and deepened the foliage to a uniform heaviness of greenery, when the writer first saw it Stockbridge showed colour enough. The broken line of hills that circle the Wallop valley and run on to Wilts., rose above the river with hedge and coppice, making dark indigo lines and patches against pink clover fields and golden corn. Purple shadows broke and gathered on the blue hills. Even the bare earth in fields lying fallow had warmth in its pale reds, and the broken chalk cliffs on the eastern side of the valley glowed dazzlingly white above the lush-grass of the river levels under the deep pools of shade the beeches cast. The Test glinted with the blue of polished steel through the tangle of water plants and rushes—"zedding" down the vale, as Assheton Smith's huntsman, George Carter, would have described its tortuous course. Set in this glory of colour lay the once "rotten borough" of Stockbridge, with a finishing note of red and rich brown to complete and intensify the richness of the landscape. Coming from the Downs with their sunburnt grasses the vivid display and contrast was a sight to remember. This,

one thought, must be Stockbridge at its best. But no! My next visit was in springtime, an April day of bewildering changes, and never a painter of all of them yet has devised method or trickery to show blues as bright and clear, greens as translucent, and golden glints as pure as decked the Downs and valley when the transient rain-storms swept over, and the sunbeams raced after the shadows, where the breeze ruffled the young wheat and brought the frail white petals of the blackthorn in showers over the primroses on the banks.

Sleepy enough the little town now, with its wide irregular street running from side to side of the narrow valley and crossing the blue "green-haired waters" of Test by a low bridge—how blue and how "green-haired" you will not realise till you have seen them for yourself under summer skies. Five centuries ago the bridge was kept in repair by the sale of indulgences. Gatehouse in his MS. history[1] records that a brass-plate on the bridge bore the request:—

"Say of your cheryte a pater noster and a Ave for the Sowllys of John Gylmyn otherwise seyd Lokke and Richard Gater and Margrete the wyf of the forsayd John and Richard, founderys and makerys of y yñ sayd Bryge yñ whos sowllys God have mercy."

Not always does the river flow serenely in her wide channels, and people will talk yet of the terrible floods of 1774 when most of the town was under water and folk could only get about the valley in boats!

Some of the houses in the little town date back to Tudor times, and every style is to be found among the odd collection—timber-framed, brick, plaster, no two alike in material, size, or colour—gathered along the broad roadway. By the railway station there yet remain some of the hovels that were built to accommodate the free and independent paid voters in the bad old days, for if its surroundings are beautiful its record is, to put it mildly, the reverse of exemplary! Gay in *A Journey to Exeter* has a well-known verse about the town, one of the four "inconsiderable places" in the county that were deprived of the privileges they enjoyed to return Members to Parliament under the old rotten borough system and methods:—

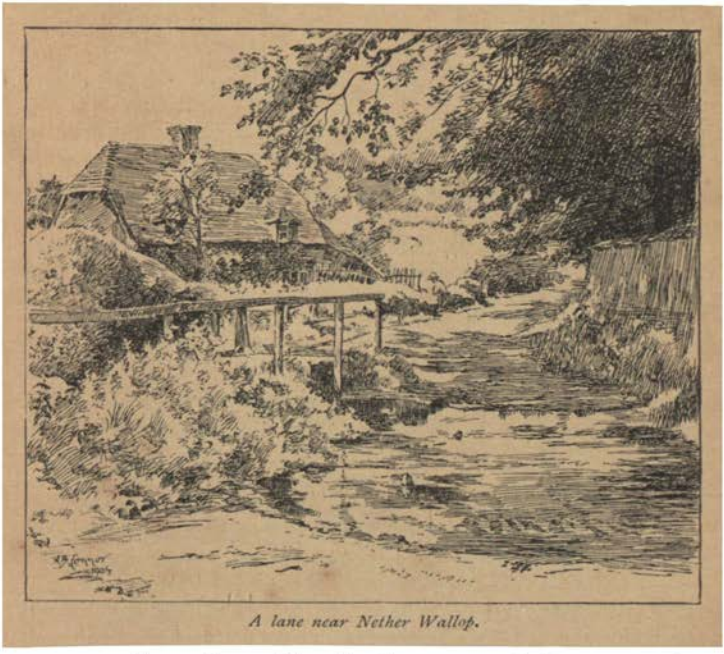
[1] In the Hartley Institute Library, Southampton.

"Sutton we pass, and leave her spacious down,
And with the setting sun reach Stockbridge town.
O'er our parch'd tongues the rich metheglin glides,
And the red dainty trout our knife divides.
Sad melancholy ev'ry visage wears;
What, no election come in seven long years!
Of all our race of Mayors, shall Snow alone
Be by Sir Richard's dedication known?
Our streets no more with tides of ale shall float,
Nor cobblers feast three years upon one vote."

Wild doings there have been, and the Grosvenor Inn with its market room must have known some mad revelries, before the disenfranchisement threatened in the reign of William III was eventually accomplished in the days of William IV. Many and many a tale is told of the elections in this the rottenest of the county boroughs. Everyone knows the story of how Steele when canvassing the town stuck an apple full of guineas and promised it to the happy couple who should first have an addition to their quiverfull nine months after he was elected. One story makes it into an apple of discord by stating that Sir Richard failed to get re-elected because the promise was unfulfilled; another reason proffered for this is that *The Crisis* roused such resentment the great essayist and humorist was indignantly discarded by his constituents. It was a costly matter to purchase the honour of being M.P. for Stockbridge. Some half century before the Reform Act of 1832 Capt. Luttrell and Lord Imham spent £10,000 on one election! Gay did not exaggerate matters in his poem. Did space permit the telling, Stockbridge racecourse has tales as many as the elections, and as varied as the characters of whom the yarns are told, from a blackleg to a Bishop! It was here—the story goes—that a candidate for a clerical post followed the ecclesiastical official who should have been at Farnham to examine him, and in the paddock, "so the folks say," a Greek Testament was produced and the examination proceeded with between the races, the finale being, "All right, all right, you'll do! What will you put on the next race?"

The Winchester road to Salisbury runs from the bridge up over Houghton Down; not such a bad hill as that on the west of the valley, but with a nasty right angle turn half way for descending traffic, and passes to the south of Chattis Hill and Danebury Down—with the deserted racecourse, and big empty

training stables—drops to Nine Mile Water,[1] and cutting the valley road swings up again through very lonely country to the Wiltshire border. The valley, Wallop Fields, down which the Wallop Brook finds its way south-east past the Wallops and Broughton to join the Test at Bossington, is wide and shallow, rising to the green Wiltshire hills, and a line of irregular peaks by Buckholt. Very old and very fascinating



A lane near Nether Wallop.

country this, with prehistoric, Roman, and Saxon remains everywhere, and some reminiscences of such a modern development as Harmony Hall, which Robert Owen founded at Broughton, that so belied its name and ended, as all socialist communities have ended, in disaster.

A century and a half ago the Nether Wallop community were greatly exercised in their minds over a mysterious haunt-

[1] Probably Nine Mill Water originally.

ing. It was a very inane ghost, and its *raison d'être* is the most mysterious part of it. Its methods of demonstration consisted in rattling the latch of a cottage door with agitating persistency. The tenant proved conclusively that the irritating noise was due to superhuman agencies, taking most commendable pains in the proving. Bits of coal, stick, or peas when placed on the latch "were constantly thrown off," so none could deny the sound must have been due to material action: then the good lady :—

"privately drew wth a Brush and Paint, a Square of about a foot extent upon the Door, so as to inclose the handle of the Latch—the Lines being all exactly even and parralel, so that had any hand, or other Power touched the said handle, it must have appeared when Day-light came; but, nothing had ever affected the same—She also privately caused Ashes to be Sifted about the Door, which must have detected any foot-step; but nothing of that sort appeared,"

writes Gatehouse, and as some of his family witnessed the solemn document wherein these doings were set forth and duly attested by the parson, he doubtless tells the tale first hand.

Grately, three miles beyond Over Wallop, up very bad lanes —it is easier reached from Quarley or Amport—is worth a visit to see the remnants of old glass in the windows of its church. When Wyatt threw the old glass from Salisbury Cathedral into the ditch this village benefited, for some was brought to its Early English church. The line from Andover to Salisbury passes at the head of the vale and meets the old Port Way, a mile beyond Grately station, whereafter rail and grassy track run parallel over the fields and open downs that stretch away to the tree-belt dividing the counties, and through Hampshire Gap both pass to Wilts. What would the old warriors who sleep under the tumulus yonder make of the freight on that luggage train shunted on a siding—quickfiring guns, by Jove! Fearsome enough anywhere those sombre field pieces, down whose throats a thousand deaths may lurk. A train-load seen here, as by the writer at the close of one summer's manœuvres, were contrast enough with the old windmill, and the line of the Roman causeway beyond, to very much give pause.

CHAPTER XV

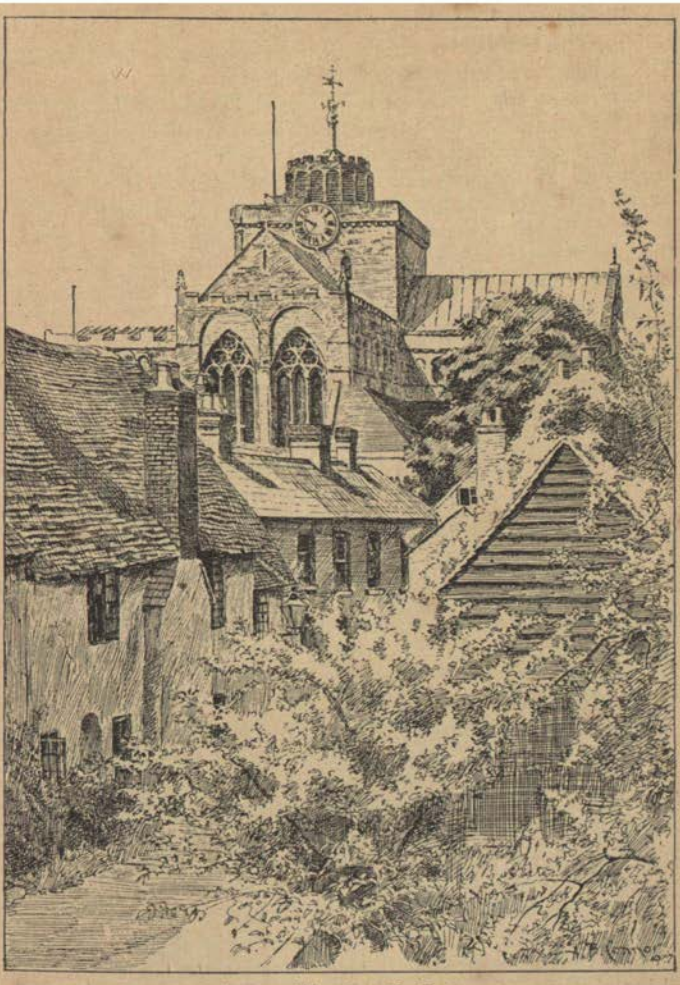
ROMSEY AND THE FOREST

A WIDE green valley, rich and peaceful, set between the free spaces of the Downs and the tree-clad ridges and wild moors of the Forest; abundance of trout, of fine poundage, grayling and salmon in the diamond-clear waters of a river from the chalk, dimpling and checking as it gathers tribute from runlet and channel in its swiftly silent passage through the meadows and marshes of the vale; a spot distant enough from the coast-lands to promise safety from sea-pirates, and near enough to the capital to allow of frequent intercourse without loss of rural privacy—could site more fitting than this island in the marsh be desired when Ethelfleda, Alfred's granddaughter, would fain exchange the distractions of her father's Court for a life of contemplation and retirement? Further down the valley, till raiding Danes destroyed it in the tenth century, a religious house stood by the tidal waters at Nursling—Nutcell or Nutshalling—where once lived Winfrid of Crediton, better known as the great missionary Boniface, who practically evangelised Germany single-handed. At Stanbridge, a mile to the north, where a gabled house to-day bears date 1652, Alfred's father had a manor, and on the further side of the valley, Michelmarsh, beyond Timsbury, on the rise of the hills outlying the solitudes—and bad roads!—of Eldon, was also a royal manor. Later on it was given by Queen Emma to St. Swithun's, after her trial and acquittal in Winchester, what time she walked bare-foot down the nave, over nine red-hot ploughshares, to prove her innocence of the charge brought against her and Bishop Alwyn, if that tale rests on any better foundation than a fourteenth-century ballad! Thus the

neighbourhood in 907 had connection with both Church and Court.

Nowadays, it must be confessed, Romsey is not entirely beautiful; in fact, as regards the little town, there is only one thing beautiful in it—the abbey. Coming to it along the road from Winchester, past rows of red villas, the spawn of a day, third-rate country shops, and a wilderness of advertisements and placards that make insistent announcement that Y's ale and Z's drugs, not to mention X's footgear, are there obtainable and none are better, Romsey would have nothing to redeem it from utter commonplace, were it not for the impassive grey tower just visible above the houses in the Market Square. One could forgive this the easier did it not encroach so nearly upon the abbey, but it is not easy to forget a factory chimney, or long line of slate roof, intruding itself into the best views of this, the finest conventual church in the south of England. The way to come to Romsey is from Salisbury, for after you cross the county border you are on one of the best and most beautiful roads in Hampshire, and from the hill above the broad Test valley the abbey church stands out impressively, dwarfing the buildings of the modern town, especially when the sun is low enough in the heavens to leave Romsey in shadow, that tones down the rows of brick and slate to a mere suggestion of red and grey amongst the trees, above the thread of the river, holding the changing colours of the sky prisoned below in the flat meadows before it passes under Middlebridge to wash the grassy lawns of Broadlands.

As a result of its surroundings Romsey Abbey is, perchance, not to be so immediately appreciated as would be the case did its paltry neighbours not crowd so insistently upon it. But once within all else is forgotten in the beauty of the grand old building, the beauty of perfect proportion, which is Truth materialised. Nor is there aught to detract from its effect. Different styles there are, but so fitted each to other that they seem but parts of a concerted whole that makes, by orderly progress, for perfection. It is music in stone, and the harmonies seem absolute. Discordant details are only to be discovered afterwards—for incongruities there are. There is certainly none of the faultless—and cold—regularity of the later-built cathedral at Salisbury; yet that may leave untouched those who never think of Romsey without a little thrill of



Romsey Abbey from the East.

pleasure in the remembrance. Furthermore, Romsey has some degree of mystery to pique admirers and whet the appetite of

the dilettante. You can get text and reference for very little of its history, and the stones keep half their secrets untold. There is no record to say who planned the noble structure, what pious donors furnished the means for its building, whose brains worked out the fine detail of arch and moulding, what skilled fingers guided the tools that fashioned cunningly devised ornament on doorway and capital, or whose was the wonderful fertility of invention displayed in the carving of the corbels, no two alike—heads crowned and cowled, faces of fair women, faces with scorn, agony, amusement, despair, avarice, the whole gamut of human passions set out in stone, interspersed with intricate devices, foliated scroll, chevron, and ball. Here you get pure Norman zigzag of the most elementary type, there a triple combination, or a leaf pattern that shows at least classical influence, and yet again the honeycomb capitals in the ambulatory have been declared to be not even Byzantine but Saracenic in origin. And withal, no record. Vaguely we can say the abbey was in the building when de Blois was occupied with his great works at St. Cross and elsewhere, and to him is popularly ascribed the designing of much of this nuns' church. But it is very evident that as it stands to-day we have the work of many builders. Walk down from the east end and note the progress in art marked with each successive bay, from the rougher, earlier work—possibly remains of late additions to the Saxon abbey—to the finished detail and consectary line of groin and shaft attained in the Early English bays at the western end of the nave aisles.

It has been suggested, and there is much to support the theory, that the present structure was built up round the older church, parts of which were actually incorporated in the new building. The foundations, at any rate, are known to exist beneath the flooring of the abbey to-day. The richness of the structure is no matter for surprise when one remembers what the abbey was in both Saxon and Norman times. Edward the Elder's daughter was only the first of many ladies of royal and noble birth to seek the seclusion of its walls. Among the unrecorded details is whether or no she held the abbatial staff, as another Ethelfleda certainly did. The story goes that the latter was the daughter of the Ealdorman Athelwold slain in Harewood, but whether by his first wife or by the faithless Elfrida is uncertain, a point which the fourteenth-

century MS.[1] account of her life decidedly makes no clearer. At any rate Athelwold left his Sydmonton property to Romsey Abbey, and there Edgar placed the orphaned and portionless girl, in the charge of the Irish Abbess Morwenna. Bishop Ethelwold at this time, 966–7, was busy restoring many of the religious houses in his see, and among forty others Romsey was refounded. The plan of this building, which resembles the Saxon church at Repton, has been traced, and part of the rough and massive masonry of the eastern apse can be seen when the loose boards near the pulpit are raised. Another relic is the curiously carved stone rood now set above the altar in the south chancel aisle. This was found, an early eighteenth-century note records, "by itself, behind the communion table on the south wall." The gilding, it is needless to remark, is modern, done, I was informed, "to show up the old work"!

Within a few months of the death of the great and wise Morwenna, Sweyn and his Danes raided up the Test, and left the abbey in ruinous state. But the nuns had got them in safety to Winchester, thanks, the legends say, to a vision vouchsafed to Abbess Elwina. Then came the rule of Ethelfleda, whose saintliness was proved by various miracles, calmly considered none very convincing or marvellous, but they adorned the tale and pointed the moral of lessons in the convent for many a year after Ethelfleda defunct was promoted to the dignity of sainthood. Far more interesting is the story of Princess Matilda, daughter of Malcolm Canmore, and a young woman of importance in that she represented the old Saxon line. The Scotch princess and her sister were left at Romsey in charge of their mother's sister, commonly known as the "Abbess" Christina, "but there is no evidence whatever to prove the fact, though her royal descent would make it likely."[2] Now among Matilda's suitors was Red William himself, but his efforts to court the young heiress at Romsey were baffled by her astute guardian. Matilda was robed in the garb of a nun, amorous Rufus taken to see roses in the abbey garden. And that was all the wooing King William the Second ever accomplished!

[1] Once in Romsey Convent, now in the British Museum (MSS. Lands. 436.)

[2] Rev. H. G. D. Liveing, *Records of Romsey Abbey*, p. 39.

Seven years later came that August hunting when, with due signs and wonders attendant—the devil, according to monkish chroniclers, appeared in many woods and secret places!—the evil king met an evil end, some seven miles' crowflight away in the Forest. We may draw our own deductions from what details are known and what suggestions offered by the various chroniclers; the fact remains as old Maistre Wace put it—

> "I know not who the bowstring drew—
> I know not how the arrow flew—
> Who bore that bow, the King who slew
> I know not—but 'twas soothly said
> That Tyrel drew, and the King lay dead."

A wild and desolate corner it is to-day, that valley with its gnarled thorn-trees in Castle Malwood Walk, where the deed, they say, was done; and a local legend tells how on the anniversary of William's death the pond near Castle Malwood turns bright red. This would seem to be an echo of William of Malmesbury's story that "in the county of Berkshire, at the village of Finchampstead, a fountain so plentifully flowed with blood for fifteen whole days, that it discoloured a neighbouring pool." If so be the Forest pond ever assumes an ensanguined hue in these days, it is doubtless caused by a plant known on other ponds in the vicinity, the *Azolla follicularis*, that floats on water like duckweed, but is crinkled, and does actually turn red. It is said not to be a native of England, but gets into ponds with other foreign water plants. However, to return to our Romsey tale. William done with, his brother Henry, Matilda's favoured suitor, wastes no time in appearing, and now the trouble is to take off the veil once assumed. But after weighty consultation at Lambeth of prelates and learned men, the decision is given—Matilda is no nun and may wed the King. Thus England gets her "Good Queen Maud," and the tale ends happily in correct story-book fashion.

Not so that of another Romsey wooing, ill-fated Mary de Blois. More trouble here, and scandal also. Princess Mary had taken all the vows and, youthful though she was, had ruled Romsey for some five years when her brother's death made her heiress of Boulogne, and a notable pawn in the game of kings. Willing or unwilling? Decide as you please—both theories have their supporters and no direct evidence avails either way.

But the rape of the abbess made a great to-do. Such setting at naught of Church laws and Church dignitaries—did not Becket thunder forth protests without avail?—was a matter not to be lightly relinquished. Mary lived for ten years in Flanders; then, whether Count Matthew of Alsace was finally convinced of the error of his ways and remorseful for the misery he inflicted on an unwilling wife, or she was overcome by the exhortations of her spiritual advisers, is disputable; but the fact remains she left the Court and her two young daughters, and retired to end her days in penitential solitude in a convent at Montreuil. One can picture the anguishing alternative set before the convent-bred girl: to live in sin or to save her soul by giving up all life held dear. Whatever may have been Abbess Mary's own share in the scandal, a scandal it was, and thereafter the tale of saints is lessened and of sinners increased in the records of Romsey. Like Wherwell it was a fashionable educational establishment and a favourite retreat, but, one gathers from what evidence the Bishops' visitations afford, discipline was generally lax, law and order uncertain. In 1283 we find Archbishop Peckham issued a special injunction forbidding the nuns to eat and drink "in the houses of lay folk and clerks in the town of Romsey," and about twenty years later Bishop Pontoise forbade "any religious lady" in the abbey "to eat, drink, or spend the night in the town."

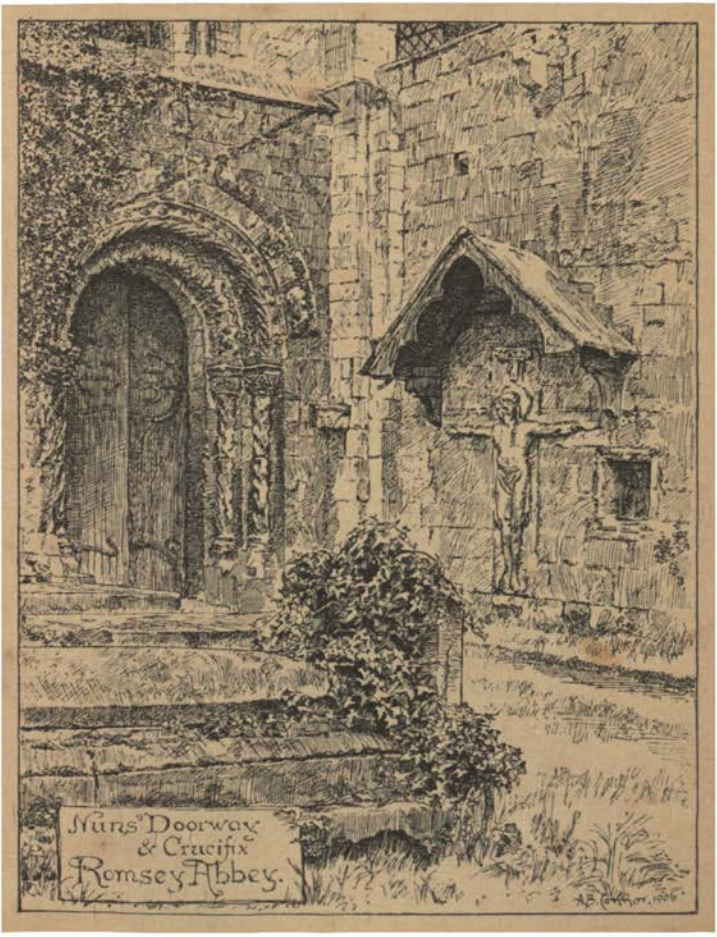
The affair of the Abbess Mary was an outrage; the fifteenth century brought unqualified scandal. Again the abbess was concerned, Elizabeth Broke by name. Six years after her election she begged Bishop Waynflete to accept her resignation of the "dignitie and office Abbaciall," as her own confession stated, "for certain reasonable causes"—perjury and infringement of the seventh commandment to wit. The resignation was accepted. Two months later the Romsey sisters re-elected their ex-abbess with but one dissentient vote besides her own! Abbess Elizabeth resumed control, but though nominal head her powers, by episcopal fiat, were restricted for a term of years. Even so, an abbess "with a past" could hardly be a workable arrangement unless the lady had exceptional gifts and strength of character, which the poor Elizabeth, it would seem, had not. Her position was a false one. Doubtless the unco' guid among the nuns took more credit to themselves on the score of their magnanimity than was salutary for their souls, or comfortable

for the abbess to live with; while those whose inclinations prompted to frivolity found in the grave lapse of their superior excuse for petty ill-doings of their own. The Visitation by Commission of Archbishop Morton in 1492 disclosed other evils than mismanagement and neglected services. Abbess Elizabeth owed about £1,000, and scandals concerning her and Master Bryce, one of the chaplains whose character was none of the best, were openly rumoured. The nuns slipped out of the church door for unauthorised visits to the town, where they were said to "frequent taverns and other suspected places." In fact the community needed repair as much as the building.

But the evil had gone on for too long to yield to any but the most drastic treatment. Matters did not mend when Joyce Rowse, the kitchener, was elected abbess, in 1502, for five years later she was admonished by Bishop Fox for "drinking and eating to enormous excess, especially at night," and the nuns were forbidden to gossip with the townsfolk through the kitchen window after dark! Abbess Joyce resigned in 1515. Twelve years later the bishop was inquiring into cases of very serious misconduct. Among the lesser offences is an amusing entry, the case of Lady Alice Gorsyn: this nun "confessed that she had used bad language with her sisters, and spread abroad reproachful and defamatory words of them." The Vicar-General ordered, if the offence were repeated, "a red tongue of cloth should be used on the barbe under the chin, and remain there for a month"! Another twelve years and the convent was suppressed.

So passed from Romsey a system that had outlived the days for which it had been designed, a community that had lapsed sadly from the high standard it professed. Of all the monastic houses in Hampshire, Romsey most deserved the fate that befell them. The conventual buildings on the south were pulled down, and to-day you can see nothing of them, though in the walls of some of the adjacent houses they say parts of the old masonry remain, and there are the two doors on the south that gave entrance to the nuns and the abbess, by way of the cloisters, past the fine old rood on the west wall of the south transept. This splendid specimen of eleventh-century work is said to owe its preservation in part to the fact that for many years it was protected by a shed, built in the angle of the walls for a general dealer's shop.

With the departure of the sisters Romsey town emerges from insignificance. The first important act was the purchase,



in 1544, of the abbey church for £100. Two centuries earlier the townsfolk had with difficulty secured a right to

a portion of the building. They had previously only been admitted to the north aisle on sufferance. There was no other church, and as the population of the little town increased the need for greater space was obvious. In 1322 the "ordination" of Romsey Vicarage had taken place—a copy of the deed of endowment is in the vestry. But needful repairs and maintenance raised the question whose purse must be lightened. Disputes between abbess and townsfolk were constant, and fifty years later there was open quarrel over the blessing of palms and boughs brought to mass on Palm Sunday. The townspeople were accused of disorderly behaviour. For their part they petitioned leave should be given them to enlarge and beautify the portion assigned for parish church, which was neither suitable nor decent, owing to its narrow width and lack of accommodation. Commissioners were sent to settle the matter, and, in the end, a faculty was granted the vicar to alter the north transept and add another aisle. To these rearrangements the Perpendicular work on the north side is due At the Dissolution the additional aisle and the Chapel of St. George—St. George's Day was a special Romsey festival within the last century—were pulled down, as were the Decorated Dedication Chapels, which had replaced the earlier and smaller Norman Lady Chapel. This explains the interposition of the Decorated windows at the east end. They were brought back to fill the arches, and very roughly was the work of insertion done, as old prints testify. To-day they are a memorial of the skill and enterprise of the late vicar, the Rev. E. L. Berthon, who cut out the windows and lowered them into their present position. Mr. Berthon had begged the Government for some assistance in this business, as requiring more than local skill, but it was refused, and this engineering feat was eventually carried through by the vicar's own workmen under his directions, without damage to so much as one pane of glass. To Mr. Berthon, indeed, a great debt of gratitude is owed by all lovers of Romsey, for his labours to restore the beautiful building were unceasing. He also discovered among much lumber in the triforium the remains of the fourteenth-century carved screen that once cut off the parish church from the nuns' building. It had been painted and was much worn and damaged, but the three sections were brought down and worked into the present

chancel screen. The vicar was a remarkable man in many ways, and one of his inventions now ranks as Romsey's most important industry, the Berthon collapsible boat. An intimate friend of his was in a terrible shipwreck, and the needless loss of life on that occasion led him to serious experiments in the construction of life-saving apparatus, of which the folding canvas boat was the outcome.

The Romsey townsfolk, then, saved their abbey church but they did not rescue many of its treasures. Hardly one of the old documents escaped destruction, and of ancient monuments there are few. In the south transept is a beautiful effigy of an unknown lady. The head-dress is said to be exactly similar to that on the seal of Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who held property in the north of the county, from which it is inferred the lady may have been one of the Nevill or Walerand families. Among the relics gathered in the ambulatory are two that must be noted. One is distinctly gruesome. When digging a grave near the abbesses' doorway in the south aisle, in 1839, a small lead coffin was discovered under the original foundations, lying north and south, *ergo* a pre-Christian burial. It may be Roman, for Roman coins and masonry have been found below the Saxon work. When opened the contents went to dust with the exception of the head of auburn hair. This plait, resting on its wooden pillow, is the relic now displayed. The second to note is the famous Psalter, an illuminated MS. written in Romsey about 1440. The small octavo volume somehow found its way to Quaritch's, possibly through the T. H. Lloyd whose name is inscribed on the fly-leaf, but the history of its adventures is another of the secrets Romsey holds so dumbly.

With later times we get more records certainly, but less to record. Romsey's story for the last four centuries has not been particularly eventful. The registers tell something of affairs in Civil War days. Among the burials are sundry "slaine at the routing of the King's forces at Romsey, Dec. 12." This in 1643. Many are merely entered as "a soldier whose name unknown." There are one or two "regrettable incidents":—

"Richard Gordon soldier slaine by his owne muskett per infortunium."

"Mar. 13. Charles Wall a soldier slaine of the King's men a sargeant."

"frances Nash, daughter of ffransis, mortally wounded by a soldier per infortunium."

Two notes tell how order was kept in those unquiet days :—

"A soldier whose name unknowne hanged for murther when Sr Th: fairfax in towne."

"William Morris a soldier hanged upon the Swan signe post."

This is the beautiful bit of hammered iron work outside the Conservative Club, once the Swan Hotel. The abbey walls to this day bear witness of the struggle that ended with the melancholy journey of the captive King from Hurst Castle through the Forest to Romsey, so to pass to the tragic finish at Whitehall. Romsey, when the strife began, was but newly filled with importance as a municipal town. The dignity was bestowed by a charter James I granted when on a visit to Broadlands in 1607. Henry I had given a four days' fair; Abbess Amicia in 1262 obtained market rights. The mills were of importance in Domesday times. In a quiet way the little town flourished.

> "Romsey appeared, in Situation
> More central, and ſuperior far
> In Times of Peace, as well as War:
> Where Buyers and themſelves wou'd be,
> From *Tolls* and Impoſitions free,
> Received with more civility,"

than at Salisbury, so the writer of an eighteenth-century broadside considered when the abbey town by Test challenged the cathedral city in protest against sundry new tolls, which resulted in the removal of the great meat market from Salisbury to Romsey in 1787, an event duly celebrated by the roasting of a fat ox in the Hampshire town.

The story is told in full by Dr. Latham, a retired physician, who settled in Romsey nine years later. He was a keen naturalist and antiquary, and collected seven quarto volumes of notes on the town and neighbourhood, with numbers of illustrations.[1] Reverses of fortune caused him to leave Romsey for Winchester, where, at the age of eighty-two, he published a *General History of Birds*, illustrated with plates of his own engraving. Among his notes on Romsey is an account of the

[1] Now in the British Museum (Add. MSS. 26774—26780).

local mummers with the words of their play, very similar to those the St. Mary Bourne mummers used. He also mentions cock-scailing, which "used to be in every avenue round the old Market House to ye great annoyance of all." It ceased in Romsey about 1752. At Lymington, on the south of the Forest, there is an entry about it in the Borough Books of 1747, and there also this Shrove Tuesday recreation has not only died out, but the very fact of its existence has been forgotten. No one can tell you about throwing the heavy sticks at the unhappy cocks, though *squoiling* is still talked of, that is, the knocking down of squirrels with weighted sticks.

"Jacob, the scourge of Grammar . . . blunderbuss of law" in the *Dunciad*, was "the son of a considerable maltster of Romsey in Southamptonshire," he recorded in his own *Lives of the Poets*; but the most successful of Romsey's sons was, without question, William, the son of Anthony Petty, the clothier. At the west end of the nave, below the three great lancet windows with their impressive simplicity of bold line—one of the finest extant specimens of an Early English west front it is, by the way—are memorials connected with the two well-known names of Palmerston and Lansdowne. Of the former anon: we are concerned for the moment with the house of Lansdowne, for to William Petty much of its fortune is due. He set forth his autobiography in his will, a very lengthy document and frequently reprinted. Throughout there is the challenging note of the man who has fought his way up from the ranks. And, truly, little reason had Anthony Petty to imagine when he dispatched young William to his grammar school that he would die an extremely wealthy man, and the descendants of the boy bred in the little brick and timber house at Romsey would be owners of Bowood! After an unfortunate experience of life at sea young Petty spent three years in the Jesuit College at Caen. Misliking the Navy, he decided to study medicine. Later we find him assistant to the anatomical professor at Oxford, and within a a few years landing at Waterford as "phyſition to ye Army who had suppreſsed ye Rebellion began in ye year 1641," or, to quote further from his will, "gaineing by my Practice about 400£ pr annum above my paid Sallery." Two years later,—

"Perceiving that the admeasurement of the lands forfeited by the forementioned Rebellion and intended to regulate the satisfaction of ye foldiers who had suppreſsed ye ſame was most inſufficiently and absurdly managed, I obtained a Contract date the eleventh of Decem^br^ 1654 for making ye ſ^d^ admeaſurement and by God's bleſsing so performed ye ſame as that I gained about 9,000£ thereby."

He certainly had "the method of making a fortune," whether by his numerous inventions, his industries he started iron works and pilchard fishing in Kerry and opened up the lead mines and timber trade on his Irish estates—by lucky speculation, or by seizing every chance, as when he exhibited his notorious patient Ann Green at Oxford.[1] At the Restoration Henry Cromwell's private secretary made his peace with the Crown as advantageously as he did everything else. Though Petty himself refused a peerage, the Shelburne title was bestowed on his widow. Their sons died childless, and title and fortune passed to their daughter, whose grandson became first Marquis of Lansdowne.

Broadlands, the Brodelonde of old days, was bought by the second Lord Palmerston from the St. Barbes, to whom it had passed in the sixteenth century by marriage with the heiress of the Flemings. The present house was built by "Capability Brown." Henry John Temple, in good time to be Viscount Palmerston and a noteworthy figure in Victorian history, was born at Broadlands in 1784. His public career kept him away from the place for many years, a fact we find regretfully noted. "I may then manage to get down to Broadlands for a week, and I long for a little run," he would write, and again hope "to get a gallop or two over the forest," or sometimes a note of "very good runs both with the Forest hounds and with Assheton Smith, who hunts the country above Stockbridge."[2]

The Forest, to those who swear by the Shires, is far from being an ideal hunting country, yet "the Father of Fox-hunters," John Warde, hunted it at one time. "Æsop" tells an excellent story of a later Master, Nicholl by name. A

[1] Condemned to death by hanging, after half an hour her body had been taken down, sent to the dissecting room, and there found to be still alive. Dr. Petty attended her, and after her recovery cleared all expenses, medical and legal, as well as getting an excellent advertisement, by charging so much per head to all who visited her!

[2] cf. Hon. Evelyn Ashley's *Life and Correspondence of Viscount Palmerston.*

Southampton barber was out with the Forest hounds one day and his ignorant zeal drew the Master's wrath upon him when his horse's hoofs were in too close proximity to the hounds. That wrath was fluently expressed.

"Upon my word, Mr. Nicholl," objected Barber Alison, "I don't understand this, sir. I did not come out to be damned."

"Then go home and be damned," was the prompt retort.

However, space permits not to tell of further doings of later-day hunting in the Forest, nor can we spare it to tell of Lord Palmerston's horses, though they were trained in the county and performed at the Hampshire Races, and were always named after farms and places near Broadlands. An exception was the winner of the Cesarewitch, a mare he bought from Lord George Bentinck and whose name gave rise to much dispute and many bets. It furnished matter for the punning lines :—

> "And some said this, and some said that
> No want there was of cacophony ;
> With short and long—with sharp and flat,
> They sore misnomered Ilione.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Pindar, alas ! is in his grave,
> But this good page of old ebony [1]
> To distant days the name shall save
> Of Palmerston and Ilione."

On the occasion of one short visit Palmerston wrote a complaint of one of his keepers, which brings to mind the story of Palmerston and the poacher :—

> "Thresher . . . spends his nights at the alehouse, in order that the poachers may spend theirs in my covers. Conceive five guns killing sixteen pheasants in Yew Tree, and beating the whole wood thoroughly ?"

Some three miles to the east, in a byway between byways, is the little village of North Baddesley, and on a tombstone by the churchyard railings the names of Charles Smith and Lord Viscount Palmerston stand out distinctly. Smith was the son of a local squatter and, incidentally, an inveterate poacher. He and an accomplice were caught by an under-keeper, Robert

[1] *Blackwood.*

Snelgrove, after dark in Lord Palmerston's coverts, and Smith, to stay pursuit, fired at a few yards' distance and wounded the keeper dangerously in the thigh. Many months later the poacher was caught, and condemned to death at Winchester Assizes; nor could Lord Palmerston secure a mitigation of the sentence passed for the "capital offence, attended with circumstances of wanton cruelty." Smith was hung. The keeper's father, Shepherd Snelgrove, was a well-known character at Wellow, and his dog, Captain, is said to have been one of the first patients of Miss Florence Nightingale, whose father purchased Embley Park from the Heathcotes in 1820. In a county that has always had so much woodland as Hamphire, it is no surprise to find poaching was a time-honoured profession long before fifteenth-century poachers, as the Romsey Manor Court Rolls attest, dammed the water-courses "and took the Lady's fish, to her grave hurt," or "placed snares called hare-pipes," which "took many hares" on the abbey lands. And not only in the Forests of Bere and Woolmer—

> ". . . The royal deer
> Made not worse venison though the buck was slain
> Without a warrant; and some folks were fain
> To fancy tea and Hollands were to choose,
> Best flavoured when they paid the King no dues."[1]

Long before the Conqueror set foot in England the vert and venison of the Forest were under the charge of four thegns, that is, verderers, with assistant "lest begends," equivalent to "regarders," and "tinemen," though landowners were at liberty to shoot wolves, bears, and foxes. Marwood gives the following version of the foresters' oath in old days:—

> "You shall true liegeman be
> Unto the King's Majestie,
> Unto the beasts of the forest you shall no hurt do,
> Nor to anything that doth belong thereunto.
> The offences of others you shall not conceal,
> But to the utmost of your power you shall them reveal;
> All these things you shall see done,
> So help you God at His holy Doom."

But lords, lay and ecclesiastical, were allowed two beasts,

[1] Caroline Bowles, *The Murder Glen.*

though they must sound a horn before the killing to announce it was a legal right and not theft they perpetrated. Hard and cruel the old Forest laws certainly were, but they were no invention of the ruthless Norman. The story of grim William's villainy dies hard. What Fuller called "the vastation" he wrought in this south-west corner of Hants has been believed for centuries, and even now there are those whose opinions are biassed by the monkish chroniclers, who had their own reasons for blackening the memory of the early Norman Kings. Laws to protect game and set apart land for its safe keeping were extant in Heptarchial days, though the so-called *Charta Canuti*, that William professed to have found among the Winchester archives, is now considered to be a very clever Norman forgery—the Conqueror's sin is craft instead of cruelty. From thirty to fifty churches destroyed, say the monks, and nary a trace of the ruins of one of the fifty has ever been so much as suggested! A densly-populated and fertile country laid waste, they croaked, and are given the lie by many an acre of land where naught but heather and pine could ever have found the meagrest sustenance!

For many years a confusion prevailed between the Baddesley in the south and this on the north of the Forest. Gilbert White in Letter XI. of his *Antiquities* mentions "South Badeisley, a preceptory of the Knights Templars," and he was by no means alone in this error. The Hospitallers had several branch establishments in the county, with head-quarters at Godsfield till the Black Death broke out and they were removed to the Preceptory about eight miles south-west of Winchester at North Baddesley. Three of the Preceptors, after this removal, became distinguished members of the order, and one, Sir William Weston, was Grand Prior when the order resisted Henry the Eighth's divorce from Queen Katherine. This led to the downfall of the Templars in England in 1540. Sir William died of grief within the year. A sixteenth-century owner of Baddesley Manor was notorious for two reasons: he and his father, Thomas Foster, were receivers for Romsey Abbey at the time of the Dissolution, and the younger Foster has been called its "evil genius." The rough rhyme in Morley's MS. history of Hursley, that Duthy quotes, explains the second reason:—

"*A Proverb when I was a Boy.*

Mr Forster, of Badsley,	was a good man,
Before the marriage	of priests began;
For he was the first	that married a nun,
For which he begat	a very rude son.
Their daughter Andrew	married Sir Willm Barew."

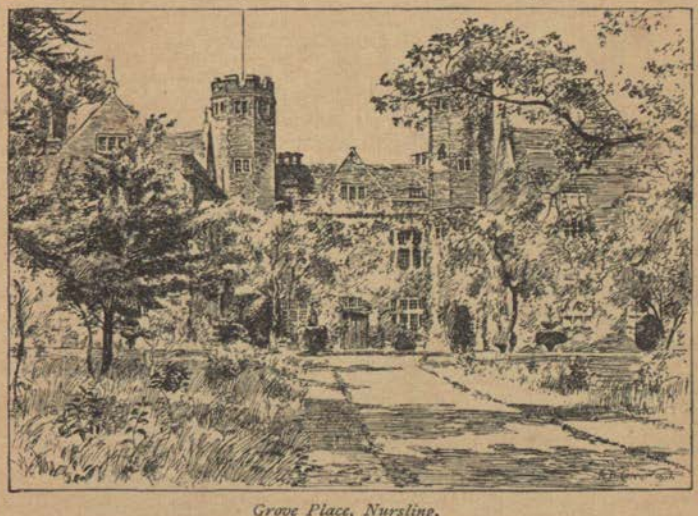
The nun was Jane Wadham, "forced by threats and machinations of malevolent persons to become a regular nun in the house of nuns at Romsey," as set forth in her petition that the marriage should be pronounced valid. According to this document, "the same parties . . , induced the said John by their threats to become a priest" also. Andrew, the "very rude son," sold the property to Sir Thomas Fleming, whose initials can be seen carved on the inner side of the chancel screen in North Baddesley Church, and who is also supposed to have given the late Elizabethan pulpit. The Lord Justice sold the property, before he bought Stoneham, to John More, whose monument is in the chancel. The Latin epitaph ends with a pun on the name:—

"*Mori dum spectas marmora disce Mori.*"

The fine tomb on the north side has been identified as that of Galfridus de Tothalle, rector for fifty years, and one of the knights. Above it is a chained Bible, one of the earliest copies of the Authorised version, the gift of a blind rector, Thomas Tomkins. In the vestry is a very ancient iron-bound chest, but among the registers therein are none relating to the Preceptory. These were supposed to have been destroyed, but it is now known that they are still preserved at Malta, written in Lingua Franca. The church itself is of all ages, probably a heathen temple in the dim past, a Romano-British and then a Saxon church—some of the stones of the last are in the fabric to-day. It is to be regarded, Sir Gilbert Scott considered, as "a sort of epitome in stone of the history of England."

From the ivy-covered red-brick tower there is a grand view of the country. Romsey is hidden in the vale, but Ampfield Woods and Winchester Downs are clearly to be seen on the north. Across the road, by the Manor House—built to replace the old buildings that, with the exception of the kitchen, were burnt down in the middle of the eighteenth century—were

the walls of the knights' garden, where two of the old fig-trees yet flourish. South lies moor and woodland, river valley and the stretching Forest. Follow the lane over Baddesley Common and by the old earthworks on Toot Hill and you come upon the highroad to Southampton, and may enter it by the front door through Totton. If time permit, divert a mile or so to Nursling, an out of-the-way little village now, but with histories and legends that go very far back. But we must on to the Forest without staying to tell how the bells were brought to the quaint little Early English church from Uphaven, or to



Grove Place, Nursling.

visit the sixteenth-century red-brick house known as Grove Place, up its old lime avenue on the hither side of the railway; though it be a beautiful old building with heraldic shields in the plaster-work—wonderful ceilings, friezes, and fireplaces. Legend claims it was a hunting box where Queen Bess herself stayed. Possibly she did when her cousin owned it—Sir Francis Knollys, author of a history of the Isle of Wight. Fate has not dealt too kindly with it, for in 1813 much of the fine interior was ruined when Dr. Edward Middleton turned it for a time into a lunatic asylum.

Beyond Totton for the first miles a stranger may be forgiven both impatience and the question, "Where is the Forest?" But gradually the orderly ordinariness of the road grows less, and after the railway is crossed at Lyndhurst Road one might be passing through a very spacious and somewhat unkempt park—yet this is the Forest. One begins to realise it behoveth to examine one's vocabulary and see what exact meaning has attached itself to the word "forest." To the majority there is little question but that it conveys the idea of a wood on a very large and wild scale. Manwood, in his *Treatise of the Laws of the Forest*, defines it as "certain territorie of woody grounds and fruitful pastures," which is somewhat different! Actually a forest is royal property set apart as a sanctuary for wild animals; if the owner be other than the Crown it ceases to be a forest and becomes a chase.

The disappearance of the deer has resulted in, at first sight, a surprising absence of wild life in the Forest. Here and there groups of forest ponies are to be seen, fraternising with the commoners' cattle,[1] and in the pannage months fattening pigs scuttle and grunt over their feast of mast and acorns. These, however, do not represent wild life. But a closer study of wood and glade—or vicarious acquaintance through the lists of natural history books!—shows that the Forest is "a sanctuary for wild life" still, despite the ravages of the collectors. Many make outcry at the evil doings of the slaughtering sportsman who pass without comment the ill-doings of the collector. But the sportsman deserves not the name who kills to extermination, and long experience of collectors—and collecting!—leads to the sad avowal that conscience is a minus quantity when on the track of a desired specimen! Collectors, have driven away the honey buzzards that yearly nested in Coalmeer Wood, the common buzzard comes no more to Birchen Hat, nor the raven to Puckpits; but, with luck, you may see a white-tailed eagle sailing majestically high over the Avon valley, or passing to Christchurch on a winter visit. Another winter visitor is the great snipe, and the black

[1] The Drift of the Forests (13. II viii. 32, *An Act concerning the Breed of Horses of Higher Stature*) enacted that forests, heaths, commons, chases, and all waste grounds were to be driven on or about St. Michael's Day that weakly or diseased mares and foals might be killed, and a check kept on the number of animals turned out by the commoners.

variety of the common snipe known as Sabine's is also to be found. *Gallinago major* is only an occasional guest and is to be looked for in most seemingly unsnipelike localities; jack snipe is a visitor also and never breeds in England, though a nest is said to have been obtained on Bransbury Marsh. Both the woodcock and the common snipe breed in the Forest, the latter, if anything, in greater numbers than formerly, though you no longer hear him drumming in the breeding season on many of the old grounds. Black game exists, but in no quantity; foxes and disease made heavy reckoning among them,

In the Forest.

and you will not see forty cocks curling on Ocknell Plain nowadays.

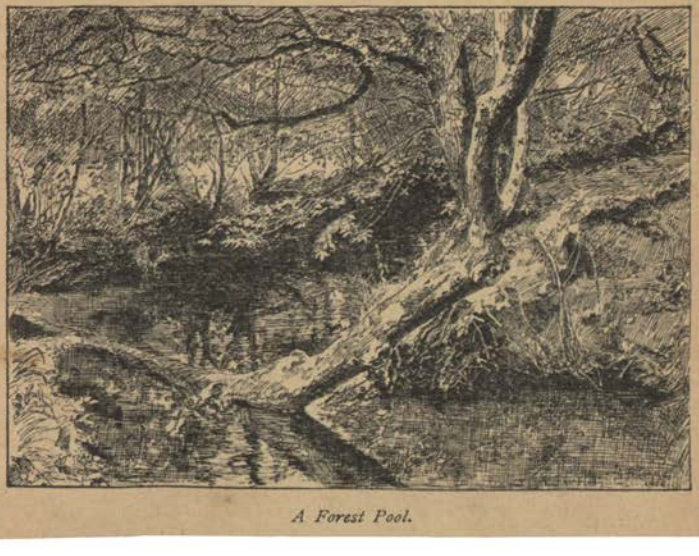
The last century has brought many changes in the Forest. That the Forest might never be discovered was of old the wish and a standing toast among the Forest folk. There are now certainly no highroads, and not many byroads that motors do not hurry along, or cyclists wend their—occasionally weary—way! Tourists come in hundreds to the hotels at Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst for every visitor who came to the inns fifty years ago. You can find solitude, but to do so you must keep away, though not necessarily far, from such tourist-haunted spots as the Rufus stone, the splendid beeches at Mark Ash—

one of the old woods, famous as the gnarled thorns of Bratley and the hornbeams and yews of Sloden—or the great oak in Knight Wood enclosure, down the rough and dusty Ornamental Drive past Vinney heronry and eagle-tree to Brockenhurst, or along the route of the circular coach trips.

Lyndhurst a generation ago was a small village of scattered cottages, but the society was delightful: Leighton and Millais—a Southampton man by birth—came there a-sketching, and the penny readings were famous, as they might well be with the aid of such a gifted musician as Adelaide Sartoris, whose account of *A Week in a French Village* makes one wish she had also given us one in her Hampshire home. Grisi sometimes sang, but was not at all appreciated by the rustic audience, whatever she might be by county magnates at concerts the music-loving Duke gave at Strathfieldsaye! Leighton's memory is, of course, perpetuated by his painting on the east wall of the church. The original Early English building gave place to a very seventeenth-century brick erection: the present church is modern, and highly ornate. The Forest Court was and is held in the Hall adjoining the Lord Warden's seventeenth-century house where George III stayed when he journeyed to Weymouth. Among the trophies in the Court-house "Red William's stirrup" does not "deck the wall," whatever rhyme and tradition may say, but a big rusty Tudor stirrup hangs that has long been so called and through which, the tale continues, all dogs had to be able to pass to escape lawing. One of the privileges held by the favoured in or near the Forest boundaries was that their dogs should be exempt from the law of expeditation. The Abbess of Romsey was so privileged, Beaulieu's Abbot also, and the men of Lymington were allowed thirty-two dogs unlawed; any big dogs above that number had to have the three claws by law demanded removed from the forefoot, to prevent poaching.

The question of arboriculture was in a large degree bound up in the question of national defence before the days of ironclads. By an Elizabethan Act no oak, beech, or ash within fourteen miles of the sea, or a navigable river, might be felled for fuel. But a century later the state of affairs was disgraceful enough. As the keepers got no pay but what they could make for themselves by sale of timber, the supply for the Navy was threatened. The Royal Society—Petty, by the

way, was one of the founders thereof—and the dockyard authorities made protest, and Evelyn's *Sylva* was the outcome. As a result of all this, many fresh plantations of oaks were started. Modern conditions commenced when the Deer Removal Act was passed in 1851. By that the Crown, in return for relinquishing the deer, was permitted to enclose 10,000 acres, in addition to the 6,000 already allowed by previous Acts, till the timber so protected should attain sufficient growth, when those enclosures should be thrown



A Forest Pool.

open and fresh ones made. But an Act of 1877 ruled this should only apply to plantations made since 1700; old woods were to remain open. The policy of later years seems to be an uncertain one. There are conflicting interests. The Forest is an estate that is expected to pay its way; a quick return is all the modern economist works for—he has no eye to spare for the future—and as conifers give the quickest return acres and acres are planted, to the eventual impoverishment of the demesne. But in these hurry-scurry days there is no

use for beech and oak that ask for over a century to come to any serviceable size. Then the commoners are concerned merely with the supply of food for the animals they have the right of turning out—if the young wood is eaten down in the old enclosures that is not their affair. This brings an element of sadness into things for all who spare a thought for a morrow removed from their own. They are passing, these beautiful woods, and what is going to replace them?

And they are beautiful. A pen but "vents in mangled forms," like a very "fool i' the forest," when it tries to hold in the cold prison of words the clean clear air and acrid smells that come with the days when Autumn's brush has lavished colour, and the bracken turns every shade the paint-box knows, and more, of russets and yellow, browns and tawny gold and orange, while the deep green of the woods is exchanged for tones innumerable, shades unnamable, effects indescribable. But autumn, if the most famous, is by no means the only season in the Forest deserving of fame. Winter has its own beauties, when snow and frost make a wondrous fairyland, till spring comes dancing through the glades to call the primroses and hyacinths from beneath the carpet of dead leaves to spread their sheets of moonlight-gold and azure under the bare boughs; when every sunbeam and every raindrop goes to the swelling of the hard little brown buds of the oak, the fat and sticky brown ones of the chestnut, the ink-black knobs of the ash, and the silk-soft tassels of baby needles on the pines. There are few days when the Forest-lover will not find it good to be alive, though skies be sometimes grey and weeping, and the wet fog clings round the beeches. In the summer a great silence holds the Forest. You hear no bird but, perchance, some old pheasant cocketting home to roost when sunset floods the glades with gold. There is inviolate peace in the woods where the shadows are infinitely deep, flecked with fire as the sunshine filters through leaves like glowing emeralds, but from the wind-swept spaces comes a low drone of pulsing life, the hum of the bees among the heather bells, half drowned in the sough-sough of the wind rippling over their purple glory to whistle down the avenues of firs and die in dreamy cadences among the sweeping beech boughs.

Hark! Is it a bumble bee in that heather tuft or——? No! See, far over the plain comes a motor with faint hoot-hoot.

It travels at speed, a red insect swirling down the yellow band of road, and leaves a trailing cloud of dust instead of glory. At most it makes but little more noise than a drumming snipe as it sweeps out of sight over the brow of the hill, and its warning hoot dies into a low moaning and fades with the vanishing dust.

In the Forest.

CHAPTER XVI

THE AVON VALLEY

"... Yon heathy hill
That rises sudden from the vale so green,
The vale far stretching as the view can reach
Under its long dark ridge, the river here
That, like a serpent, through the grassy mead
Winds on."

SOUTHEY.—*For the Banks of the Hampshire Avon.*

THE ancient Britons, to keep to the good old term we knew in nursery days, were not such despicable fighters when Cæsar first landed on the Kentish coast, "outside of the habitable world" in the opinion of his legions. Their methods, one gathers, were not dissimilar to the tactics brother Boer affected, fighting on foot, but possessing, thanks to their horses, chariots, and fine horse-mastership, all the mobility of cavalry. The Romano-Briton three or four hundred years later was a different, and from the fighting point of view far inferior, creature. "On paper" (*even in those early days!*) an army existed in Albion long after every soldier with any pretence of fighting quality had been withdrawn from the island, but the Briton who lived softly in the country villas, or trafficked in the towns, was hardly of the stuff to make any show of effective resistance against the practised warriors from the Baltic marshes and the wild white North, when the "nailed barks" brought the sea-pirates to the low-coast lands of Hampshire. However specialists may dispute over the exact site of the old chroniclers' Cerdic's Ore, they agree that on one or other bank of Southampton Water, by Hamble or by Calshot, the Saxon Cerdic landed, when he, "having matured his ambition in domestic

broils, determined to leave his native land and extend his fame by the sword."[1] As the old historian Gaimar tells :—

" *Cerdic od son navire*
Arriva à Certesore

The pirate hordes beached their five ceols and formed line of battle on the shore, which all the efforts of the Britons failed to break; and ere the sun had set upon their coming the British warriors, an "undisciplined multitude" William of Malmesbury called them, fell back, worn-out and disheartened by repeated failures, and left the Saxons to ravage the coast. This was in 495. Twenty-four years later the last efforts of the Britons to keep the invaders from the fertile valleys and the uplands, with long protecting lines of Romano-British earthworks, no longer patrolled by Rome's legionaries, ended when night closed over the field of Cerdic's-Ford—now Charford—the Bloody Marshes in Taylor's map of Hampshire (1759), for "a great blow," to quote Henry of Huntingdon, had fallen "on the dwellers in Albion, and greater yet had it been but for the sun going down." Here then, in one of the most remote and peaceful corners of our county, was Wessex founded, the kingdom of England begun. Nor is it trenching unduly on imagination to picture this valley of the Avon, not only as a very early Saxon colony, but also as an important one. By the estuary of the river stood a great monastic settlement; a Saxon church, noticeable for its unusual length, stands to this day at Breamore; and just before you cross the Wiltshire border, if you come to this valley of the Avon by road or rail from Salisbury, you pass Downton *Moot*, the place for the gathering of the people when the Mother of Parliaments was in embryo, with—— but Downton and its histories are undeniably Wiltshire's!

The Avon enters Hants one mile below Downton, and two to the west of Tinney's Firs, where the excellent road from Southampton turns through North Charford village. At Bramshaw Telegraph the highroad forks westwards across the moors to Fordingbridge or by oaks and firs along the county border to Downton, with wild grey and purple heaths to the south, and distant views northwards over Wiltshire woods. The lane

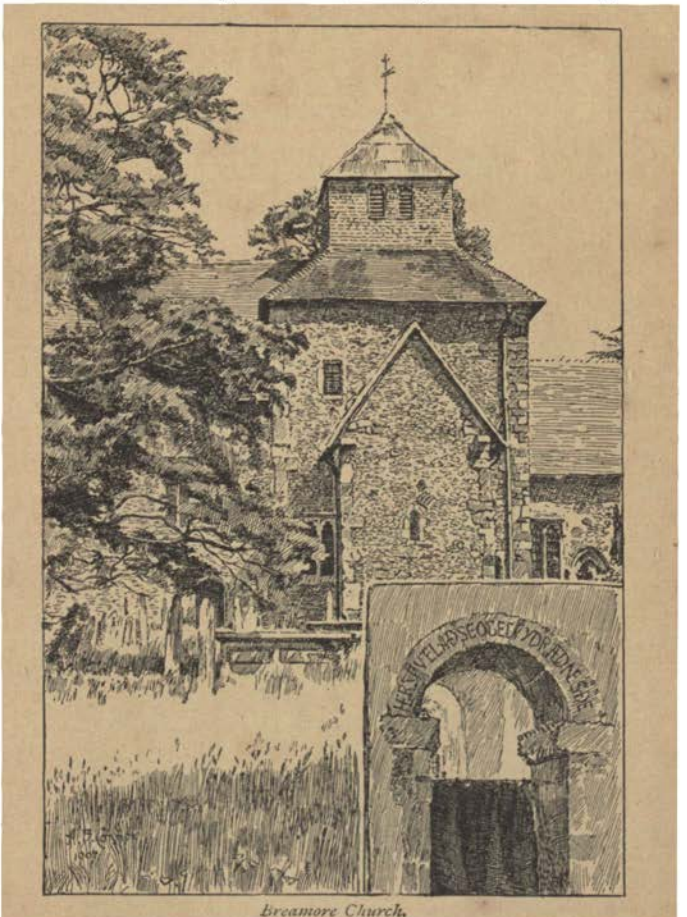
[1] William of Malmesbury.

through Charford leads by the grassy common and old cottages of Hatchet Green, past a neglected-looking lodge and weed-grown drive that runs parallel with the roadway down a fine elm avenue to Hale Manor. The square grey house looks out over the valley to the west, where the dark waters of the Avon wind along rush-bordered channels. Beyond lie the Wiltshire Downs, gaily chequered gold and bronze, russet and grey in the autumn sun; here a patch of chalky fallow, there the dark-green of roots between the rich yellow of ripened corn, while the krick-krick, krick-krick of a reaping machine explains the line of brown that lengthens through the shimmering gold. The road circles one side of the park where the church stands, with monuments of the Archer family, and passes by old elms and more than one fine ash, a high thatched wall, and a cottage or two. The descent is steep, and the furrows in the meadows that shelve to the valley show how the torrents must have poured off the high lands to leave such a network of wrinkles on the rounded slopes. A very tumbled bit of land is this crease in the hills down to the reedy water-meadows by the Avon.

Turning at Wood Green the lane crosses the river and railway to Breamore. "Bremmer" is the local pronunciation. Behind the trim cottages and bright garden plots along the Salisbury road lies an open green, across which a shallow brooklet broadens to a pool where the village cows foregather for a little bovine gossip in the noonday heat.

The old church with its stone coffins and ancient yew was considered worthy of the tourist's notice, even before recent restorations had discovered under the plaster and whitewash such unmistakable Saxon masonry as the stonework of the quoins and the narrow pilasters. It stands in the grounds of Breamore House, rebuilt half a century ago, after a fire that destroyed all but one Elizabethan wing. The church tower was originally supported by four Saxon arches, and one remains with its cable moulding and curious inscription, said to date from the eleventh century. The lettering is quaint, and to the uninitiated certainly fails now to convey its message, "Here the covenant becomes manifest to thee." Scraps of other letters have been found that suggest further inscriptions swept away in some old-time restoration. There is later work in the building, but in the main it is the original church, with several

of the Saxon windows and a much battered stone rood, like that at Headbourne Worthy, one of the nine specimens in Hampshire



Breamore Church.

of old sculpture accepted by present-day experts as Saxon. In the Priory Meadow, by the river bank, the traces of some vanished building and a stone coffin tell of the Priory that

once stood there, founded by Baldwin de Redvers and Hugh, his uncle. Henry III gave ten oaks from Melchet for re-roofing, but the Canons of St. Michael's only secured two, and petitioned his son thereabout at Winchester; so Roger de Clifford, "justice of the forest on this side Trent," was ordered to inquire into the business. In 1332 the Canons subscribed sixty shillings towards the marriage of Eleanor, the King's sister, when Robert de Kelleseye came a-begging for that purpose. Thus did royal ladies get their trousseaux and wedding cakes in fourteenth-century days! At the dissolution Prior Finch proffered his services to Cromwell but he could not save his house thereby. The site, lands, and forest rights were granted to the Marquis of Exeter.

If away from the busy circles of life, Breamore is not isolated, for it lies by a highway from Salisbury and has a station on the branch Dorset and Salisbury line, and though Fordingbridge is a better centre from which to explore this corner of the county, Breamore offers a varied choice for leisurely rambles. Well does the writer recall one cloudless July day spent in Breamore Wood and on the wide grass spaces beyond, Breamore Down with its Miz-Maze, tree-crowned Wick Down, and wilder Whitsbury. A hollow way, sunk five or six feet below the level of the bordering fields, runs from Upper Street to the corner of the wood. It is a lonely land, but that made it all the more delightful when the sweet summer air soughed softly up the valley, and billowy rain-clouds threw ghostly battalions of irregular and fleeting shadows, now on the acres of golden corn spread over the typical curves of the downland, now on the reddish soil powdered with white chalk patches that showed betwixt the green of upspringing crops. The grassy borders were ablaze with flowers, the deep violet-blue of the wild Canterbury bell, the more delicate mauve of the scabious, with wild sage, knapweed, mint and common marjoram in infinite variety of purples and pinks, blent with the yellows of ragwort and mulleins, whilst among the nodding cornstalks the scarlet blaze of poppies hung over the wreathed stems of the convolvulus—"lilies," some of the Hampshire children call the scented pink-and-white bugles. On Breamore Down, twined in the rough hedge round the wood, a rarer beauty is to be found, the creamy-yellow, rose-tinted blossoms of the narrow-leaved everlasting pea.

The Miz-Maze on the Down must have a word before we leave these solitudes to the birds and butterflies. Though in the Middle Ages they were frequent enough, a genuine old maze is now a rare antiquity, for, as a rule,—

> " . . . the quaint mazes in the wanton green
> For lack of tread are indistinguishable."

The plan of this maze differs from that on St. Catherine's Hill; it is circular, and the path lies between the lines and not along them. Some writers have attributed it to the monks of Breamore Priory, but others claim a far older origin for English mazes. Here it might be any age, for, after all, on these wild Downs a twelfth-century Priory is modern beside those lines of ancient camps and earthworks, Grim's Dyke, Bokerly Dyke, and the crumbling memorials of untold ages, the tumuli that dot the rolling uplands. Here, probably, the corn has ripened under successive summer skies since Neolithic man—or woman more likely!—first scraped the chalky soil with rough flint instrument, and many a battle have these old wolds witnessed, coming and going of many a conqueror, birth and death of many a people.

From Whitsbury Down one gets an extensive view of the lonely downland, dry grassy reaches broken by far-stretching cornfields. Here and there a sheep-bell tinkles from some distant flock on the open down, but farms are few and far between, and the lanes of the roughest, often only cart-tracks mark the way over the short, close turf. A rather better lane runs between Dunberry Hill and the irregular tree-crested ridge of Rockbourne Down, brown and gold in the summer noonday, with a bold outlining of dark hedgerows. Another lane leads to Whitsbury Village, which has an early twelfth-century church—restored some ten or twelve years ago. Rockbourne, an equally secluded village, is hid in the hollow between Dunberry and Damerham Knoll. By the ancient church stands a fine old farmhouse that in bygone times was Rockbourne Manor House, and the home of Sir John Cooper, father of Dryden's "false Achitophel," the Earl of Shaftesbury. He was accused by Charles II of being "the wickedest fellow" in his dominions. "May it please your Majesty," the Earl is said to have gravely answered, "of a subject, I believe I am." Some of the big barns and farm buildings,

with remains of arched doors and windows, are parts of the old house and its chapel. The church itself has some interesting features, an Early English arcade, a Norman doorway. In the chancel by the Coote hatchment and monuments hang four old colours; very faded and worn are their pale blue and yellow, dun and red, and rusty black; tattered relics of victory won in lands so distant that they would seem too utterly remote for connection with this valley, were there any corner of England that has not sent forth some son to win

Rockbourne Manor Farm.

her empire in furthest continents and on most distant seas. So in the grounds of West Park, just below the village, is a pillar, erected by the East India Company, that commemorates the taking of Pondicherry in 1761, for there is the Hampshire home of an Irish family, the Cootes, and this pillar is reminder of gallant Sir Eyre, who, after an eighteen months' blockade, captured "the key to the Isle of France," and the scene of many struggles between France and Great Britain for mastery in India; hero too of other battles, for which the old John Company expended £700 on a diamond-hilted presentation

sword as mark of appreciation. On his return from India in 1762 Sir Eyre purchased the West Park estates. He died in India, but his body was brought to Rockbourne for interment.

To the south and west the Allen River drains a secluded and lonely corner of the county, and a flinty lane, with all the take-it-or-leave-it air of a single line a hundred miles away from any competing railway system, leads by the little river up to Martin, the most westerly village in Hampshire. East Martin, the more modern corner, lies up one branch of the lane that

Cottage at Martin, dated 1633.

forks a quarter of a mile above Tidpit, and the old houses of Martin itself are scattered for a mile along the other lane, that creeps likewise up past deep-hedged paddocks to the county border. The highway cuts the Dorset boundary by Bokerly Ditch, runs for three miles on Hampshire ground, and makes its exit by Grim's Ditch into Wilts. The guide books ignore Martin, but a ramble thither certainly awoke in me a desire to make further acquaintance with its odd and quiet nooks. It is all old, as befits a corner hemmed in with prehistoric fosse and rampart. One is only surprised that a cottage with

venerable thatched gable, and brick and timber of age-toned reds and greys, should bear date no earlier than 1633. The old buildings, of brick, flint, and wooden frames, look very time-worn under their protecting thatch, set irregularly, this one down on the road level, that perched above on a bank with rough brick steps up to the door from a path that is raised and boarded some two feet above the road. A turn by a crumbling chalk wall leads to the church, where the first thing one notices is the west window set askew to fit in between the corner and central buttresses. The whole building, stone and flint pillars and colour-washed walls, looks rather patchworky, from the remnants of the twelfth-century original to the last nineteenth-century restoration.

The connecting link between the end of all things where Martin lies and the world as represented by the railway and the old town of Fordingbridge, is South Damerham. Its thirteenth-century church on a spur of the hills above the Allen has been much restored. Ivy mantles the south walls up to the red tiles of the roof, and the squat, square tower on the south side of the chancel, entirely hiding the masonry. The views are notable, from the gate looking over the Avon valley to Godshill Inclosure, or westwards up the valley between the Downs. This view, always fine, under the glory of sunset, is one to be remembered. The village left only an impression of quiet peacefulness, and red roses nodding above violet shadows on white cottage walls. The road passes on over the hillside through Lower Court Wood and by Sandhill Heath to Fordingbridge station and town.

The transition from old-world villages to modern brick villas comes with something of suddenness, for to the west of the town brickfields, small allotments, and rows of new houses mark the change of times and owners recent years have brought. The town itself has no very ancient air about it, in fact it is too old to look old! The church has an air of curious lopsidedness, for the slender Decorated pillars give the impression of being insufficient to support the weight of the superstructure, and despite obvious restoration the building has an extraordinarily decrepit look. There is a good deal to interest the architectural student as the fabric shows variety of styles; the chancel with its three-light lancet window is Early English, a chapel of the Decorated period is beyond the arcade on the

north, the roof is Perpendicular, and the old beams in the chapel show some very fine and elaborate carving. There was a Hospital in very early days for wayfarers and the poor of the neighbourhood, but its history is for the most part lost. "Hospitals," as Fuller remarked, "generally have the *rickets*, whose heads, their Masters, grow over great and rich, whilst their poor bodies pine away and consume." The market pined away also and failed, like many markets when more modern methods superseded the old meetings of the country-side for sale and barter. In the riots of the 'thirties Fording-

Fordingbridge Church.

bridge suffered somewhat severely and the mills were burnt, whereafter the incendiaries marched down the valley bent on further destruction, but the good men of Ringwood mustered in opposition and saved their town. The cordage and sail trade partly continues, and at least one other manufacture flourishes.

Nowadays the little town is perhaps best known as head-quarters for those brothers of the angle who come a-fishing in the troutful, and also pikeful, waters of the Avon. The Avon cannot compete with Test and Itchen as a trout stream, but has

the best salmon and coarse fishing the county has to offer. Pike-fishing in Ireland I know, and Irish pike have I eaten, but of Avon pike nary a one! Cooked with discretion and knowledge there are worse things than a jack; "of this more, but that it is observed, that the old or very great pikes have more of state than goodness," to quote Walton. Those who know the old angler's pages will remember his delightful instructions how to fish for pike with a frog, "the yellowest you can get," and those who do not had best amend their ignorance right speedily! Izaak's love of the marvellous and his simple faith

Gorley Firs.

is nowhere more marked than in the passage where he tells how after August "the frog's mouth grows up, and he continues so for at least six months without eating, but is sustained none but He whose name is Wonderful knows how," and what could be more naïve than the injunction when fixing the frog to the arming-line to "use him as though you loved him, that is, harm him as little as you may possibly, that he may live the longer"? Walton's "choicely good" recipe for his cooking to make a "dish of meat . . . too good for any but anglers, or very honest men," is too long to quote and too elaborate for general use, but pike baked in wine and well stuffed with

butter, lemon, and veal stuffing, is quite "choicely good" enough. But 'ware the small bones!

From Fordingbridge one passes south to a quiet agricultural country in the wide valley down which the Avon winds lazily seawards between low hills. It has been compared to the Warwickshire Avon, and there is notable similarity between the two, but the southern river, though it has many a twist and turn, at any rate in its Hampshire course, has no such a tangle of coils as the western stream placidly winds round Breedon as if unwilling to leave the hayfields and hedgerows to attend to business, and yield its waters to the Severn at Tewkesbury. But though the view from Breedon Hill is fine, Hampshire's Avon

Cottage at South Gorley.

can show a finer by its banks, for the view from Gorley Hill, halfway between Fordingbridge and Ellingham, is a noted one. The valley spreads southward to Hengistbury Head, north to the Wiltshire Downs, with Salisbury Cathedral's exquisite spire rising in the blue distance, whilst eastward rolls the Forest, ridge on ridge, deep woods and purple moors, with Ditchend and Latchmore Brooks, Dockens Water, and many a smaller rill winding through the rushy bottoms to join the big river in the vale to the west. Ellingham lies to the south down the elm-bordered road and there we must pause in this all too rapid transit, for it has principal share in one of Hampshire's tragedies.

Monmouth's star had set amid the blood-stained rhines of

Sedgemoor, and proved no star, but a wild meteor that lured the Puritan West to disastrous insurrection: Peter Mews, soldier and bishop, had once again resigned his sword; like an old war horse the aged Doctor had scented the battle from afar, the episcopal coach had rumbled out westwards over Winchester Downs, and the episcopal coach horses had drawn the great guns of the King's Artillery into the Western Zoyland road and turned the scale of battle finally against the rebels: thereafter Monmouth had fled—

"To be taken gathering pease,"

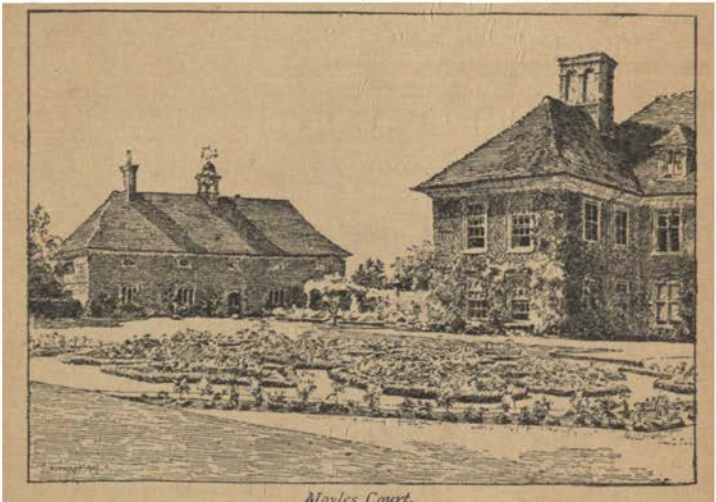
and, wretched fugitive, haled forth to Ringwood, there to write the craven letter that betrayed base blood mingled with royal in his veins: Major Dore, the Mayor of Lymington, who had headed the Hampshire contingent of Monmouth's volunteers, was a prisoner: the west country lay stricken to the heart; broken by the futile rebellion, lashed to a helpless fury of grief by the bloody tyranny of Kirke and his lambs: good Bishop Ken laboured in his western diocese to relieve the sufferings of the prisoners and comfort those appointed to die: when at Winchester Judge Jeffreys started his black assize. If the story of Alice Lisle stood alone it were enough to damn her judge and make the Bloody Assizes a memory to shudder at. Two survivors of the fight at Sedgemoor had been taken in hiding at Moyles Court. Their hostess, though the widow of the regicide, "Lord" Lisle, had wept for the murdered King, Macaulay tells us, and aided many a distressed Cavalier during the Civil War; for her own family, the Beconshaws of Earlstone, as has been mentioned, were Royalists, and her sympathies were wide as her hospitality. When Hickes and Nelthorpe claimed mercy and assistance they were entertained and hidden. But brother betrayed brother in those unhappy days; the refugees had been seen, information was given to the King's troops in the neighbourhood, and search discovered the fugitives in priest's hole and malthouse. Therefore the aged lady was arraigned for treason in that she had wittingly assisted traitors. On this point opinion is divided. Macaulay, writing with partisan bitterness, would make the case as black as may be against his *bêtes noirs*, the detested Judge, and "the savage and implacable James." but others consider that the Judge

established her guilty complicity in a masterly though brutal manner. None the less the terrible scene in Winchester Hall when the foul-mouthed Judge raved and cursed, and the astounded Hampshire gentlemen would fain protect the aged prisoner but dared not, redounds to nobody's credit but the victim's. Well for Monmouth could he have met his fate with the calm dignity with which Dame Alicia Lisle faced her furious judge and listened to the ghastly sentence—to be drawn on a hurdle to the place of execution and there be burned alive. But Jeffreys, though he might brow-beat the witnesses and overawe the country squires, for all his power dared not enforce such sentence against the strenuous opposition of the Bishop and his clergy. Lady Lisle was reprieved, but the King in her case did prove "implacable," nor, remembering his father's death, is the matter cause so much for surprise as regret. A more merciful sentence was substituted, but on September 2, 1685, the venerable lady was beheaded in Winchester Market Place. She was buried at Ellingham, under the battered grey stone altar tomb by the south door.

The Early English priory church of Ellingham was restored some twenty years ago, and the date 1720 on the porch testifies to eighteenth-century restoration. The Priory, a cell of the alien house of St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte in Normandy, was founded by William de Solariis in 1160. It was sequestered during the French wars, and in 1385 given to William Olyver, keeper of St. John's Hospital at Fordingbridge. A century later Edward IV gave it to Eton. At the west end is a Flemish picture of the Last Judgment in a finely carved oak frame ; the lightness of the tasselled drapery falling from a bow in the top corner betrays some master's hand guided chisel and gouge for its fashioning. This was the reredos at one time. There is a handsome carved screen and canopy to the Moyles Court pew, and more carving on the rood screen below the wall where rood loft and rood are said to be blocked up under the plaster. Moyles Court itself is a mile away, where the crimson flood of heather from the wild Forest moors checks and stays by grassy elm-shaded meadow, and Dockens Water from its heathy bottoms purls softly over the roadway by a grand oak. Creepers cling to the red brick walls of its wings and recessed front, the garden around sets the old Elizabethan house in

serene and charming frame, and the limes in the avenue fill the air with their fragrance when summer smiles on the valley.

Two miles to the south, where Avon's wandering streams unite in a sedgy lake, roads and railways meet at the country town of Ringwood, and in summer time the coaches still pass with rattle of merry horn as in olden days. Merrier the horn should be, for never were passengers on less serious business. Stay though! Sightseeing is a very serious business after all, and the tourists to Wimborne, or on a circular Forest tour, may be never a whit lighter-spirited than travellers by coach a century ago. How-



Moyles Court.

ever, there are no weighty matters to recall to mind in Ringwood. By the irregular market square the embattled tower of the church rises conspicuously above the little town with its quaint houses, none suggestive of great age, but with here a gable, there an odd projecting window, weathered tiles, grey-brown thatch, dormer, parapet, diamond-paned lattice, in styles and fashions diversified enough along the narrow and twisty streets.

Of Saxon Ringwood we know only that it was a royal manor, with a church and a mill. In the thirteenth century the "old"

church was built, but it suffered past reparation at the hands of successive renovators and restorers before it was pulled down and entirely rebuilt over fifty years ago One Ringwood parson, John Hodgkins, is remembered as the friend and host of Henry Tudor, and a legend of the White Hart Hotel also connects this king with the town, and claims the inn was the original one to bear that famous sign. According to the story, one day when Henry VII was hunting with his court in the Forest, a renowned white hart called "Albert" was enlarged and gave them one of the finest runs on record before turning to bay in the water meadows by the Avon. At the request of the ladies the hounds were whipped off and the cervine hero decorated with a collar of gold. To commemorate the sport the hostelry where the king and his followers rested had a picture of the gallant hart with his gold chain hung out for its sign. Which all may be true enough as regards Ringwood, but the origin of the general use of the sign is more probably attributable to the fact that it was Edward IV's badge, and his practical interest in the highroads of his kingdom and establishment of posting-houses along all the main routes caused its adoption. Certes it is very seldom that a genuine White Hart sign will be found off the main roads, though sometimes an old thoroughfare may be traced thereby when it has become a deserted by-lane. Another local version of the legend annexes the story, to which Dorset has possibly more correct title, of the killing by Thomas de la Lind of a favourite white stag that belonged to Henry III, for which offence he and his family paid white hart silver yearly to the king.

Ringwood's market and fair date from thirteenth- and fourteenth-century days, and its breweries were long famous, though but one remains. It is hardly now a "considerable" town, and agricultural depression has lessened the output and destroyed the market for country produce that was a staple commodity, with Forest ponies and cheese, at this central mart. Nor has the town much else of interest; they will point out the house where Monmouth is reported to have written his cowardly appeal, by the bridge that leads westward over the sedge-bordered Avon, and the Manor House where Lord Chief Justice William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, lived. He was once, they say, a scholar at the Free School, founded in

1586 by John Lyne, where Bishop Stillingfleet. also was educated. The old school stood by the churchyard beyond the pollarded limes that were planted nearly two hundred years ago by a Blashford gardener, Bower by name, whose feats at drinking Ringwood ale are not yet forgotten. Sixteen pints a day, an old memorandum states, could this bibulous son of Adam dispose of when working in the churchyard. The sexton, it is noted, was only allowed half that quantity!

CHAPTER XVII

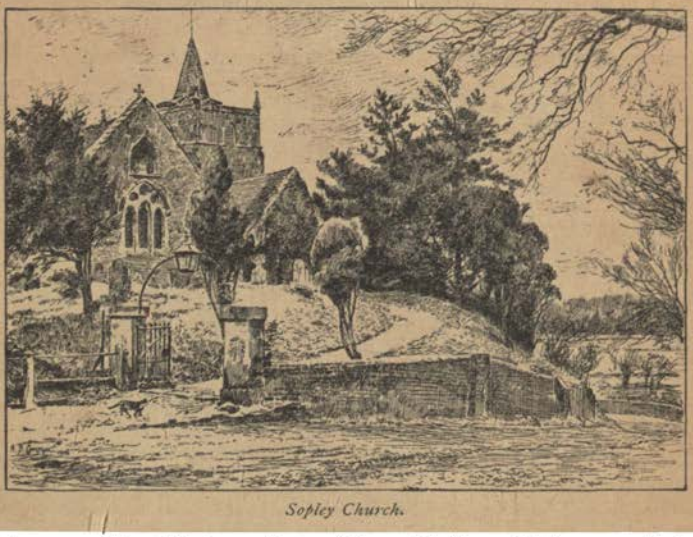
CHRISTCHURCH BAY

" When down from Sarum's plains
Clear Avon coming in, her sister Stour doth call,
And at New Forest's foot into the sea do fall."
—DRAYTON.—*Polyolbion.*

FROM Ringwood an easy road runs down the low green valley to the west of the meadows and marshes where silver Avon winds tortuously in half a dozen channels, spreads into shallow lakelets, and laves the rushes of a swampy corner. It is all very sweet, verdant, and restful. Lanes in plenty lead eastwards to the Forest by the commons of Bisterne and Kingston, by Ripley Wood, Shirley or Bransgore, and just before Sopley is reached a lane branches west over the river to Herne and the open heaths along the Dorset border. Sopley is a village worth delay, for it has picturesque corners to show, old houses with deep thatch and pendant eaves, and an interesting church. The river scenery moreover is of the most attractive. From the knoll on which the church stands the view is very beautiful. The Avon slips seawards under overhanging oaks to the wide estuary where Stour rolls out from Dorset to join it over the salt sea-marshes, and when its waters are a placid primrose under the yellow sunset glow a more entirely peaceful spot were hard to find. The dark ridge of hill looms coppery purple above the deep green woods at its foot, while the white moon hangs over the misty distance beyond where Christchurch rises grey from its trees, and the long shadows creep over the intense green of the river meadows till cattle and willows are swallowed in the haze and gloom. But as Rockbourne recalled memories of battle and victory in Eastern lands, so does the big altar

tomb to the south of Sopley Church, for there rests one whose name is connected with a story writ in our annals in letters of blood—John, Lord Keane, who commanded the army that marched to Kabul in 1839.

Seen in retrospect it is not easy to discover wherein lay real difficulty to compliance when Dost Mahomed requested a renewal of the friendly relations established with Kabul in 1809. The British authorities had practically denied recognition to the claim of his rival, Shah Sujah, to whom support had been refused when twice he attempted to regain his lost



Sopley Church.

throne. Dost Mahomed's troubles with his neighbours called but for a warning to Persia and some diplomatic adjustment between Afghan and Sikh. Neither should have presented insuperable obstacles to British statesmen. But the closing years of the 'thirties were not remarkable for statesmanship of a high order. In one continent Glenelg had worked irremediable mischief through ignoring and discrediting the man on the spot. His colleagues, in like manner, paved the way to disaster in another. The Anglo-Afghan policy was reversed. Burnes, sent with a British Mission to Kabul, was forced to leave the

field open to Russian competitors, his warnings unheeded, his advice set aside, and the aid refused to Sujah-ul-Mulk when the Afghan tribes were divided, was lavished after Dost Mahomed had established some degree of unity! Keane captured Ghazni and reached Kabul, the Shah was reinstated with pomp and ceremony, on the Durani throne. His English allies were decorated, and Sir John withdrew, leaving half his troops to assist the Envoy, Sir William Macnaghten, and a band of British officers to command the Shah's force. The terrible sequel is known—"disasters unparalleled in their extent, unless by the errors in which they originated, and by the treachery by which they were completed," as the viceregal proclamation afterwards put it. Did Ellenborough's grandiloquent assertion ever reach to the fastnesses among the rocky hills beyond the Indian border, many a hardy tribesman when he—

> ". . . spat and grinned with glee
> As he ground the butcher-knife of the Khyberee,"

or cast a proud eye on the chased barrel and inlaid stock of his *jezail*, must have marvelled what all the pother had been about, since he was left in the end to do—*as punishment*—only what he desired and intended to do in the beginning—manage his own affairs after his own fashion. Whatever the Afghan popular equivalent for the Latin tag, *Quos Deus vult perdere prius dementat*, be sure it was quoted from end to end of the wild uplands for many a day after the fatal winter of 1841-2.

The road down which the coaches come to Ringwood from the Forest passes westwards by plantations of fir and heather-clad wastes to Wimborne. It is a good road for motors and coaches, and gives quite a sufficient idea of the country for the superficial or *blasé* tourist, though it offers no conception of the hidden joys that await the real country-lover among the heather and bracken or on the marshes by the riverside, very happy hunting grounds for the naturalist, as the Museum at Christchurch attests. By the "county bridge" the road passes into Dorset, and the Moors river swells importantly below the red-brick arch, for has it not hitherto been occupied doing boundary between the counties all its little course? Some half-mile lower, however, its official life ends by a ford, and the river wanders gaily off westwards, as though to join the Avon, along a green ribbon of meadow between the heathery

spaces of East Parley Common and Barnsfield Heath. No highway diverges over this solitary corner, and most of the rough lanes that lead thereto, after deteriorating into mere cart tracks, end by vanishing entirely away among the gorse brakes and bushes of heather. Here and there a fir plantation stands out dark against the purple and gold, or white tufts of bog-cotton nodding over patches of vivid green by bog-myrtle and rush mark where a marshy spot hides treacherously in some shallow depression of the broken ground. The little Moors slips by low banks overhung with stunted oak and willow, and the bracken-clad shoulder of Foxbury Hill rises russet and brown by the sombre pines. This was country to tempt to a ramble one day of delights and transgressions, before equinoctial storms had despoiled September of her royalty of colour and sunshine. The transgressions were mainly such venial sins as trespass, but, open confession being good for the soul, did that day include a less forgivable crime, the utter demoralisation of a fat retriever pup! After sundry introductory snaps and yapping Puppy decided to start on his own and explore his universe with me, a stranger. He rolled helplessly in the deep ruts of the grey, chalky trackway, sprawled despairingly in tangles of briar, tumbled over his own nose and lost himself again and again in a tussock of heather. But if his shrill, excited bark scared a dozen long-tailed tits and blackcaps twittering in the alders by the riverside, his vagaries led to wild and charming nooks, to mossy banks where the grand osmunda spread its royal fronds above hidden pools, and were excuse for the most inconsequent of wanderings and resultant discovery of many a delightful view.

The light railway from Ringwood to Christchurch and the shorter but, owing to its rougher surface, less frequented road, lie to the east of these open spaces and just above the river levels. The prospect is magnificent, finer than any the high-road offers. St. Catherine's Hill rises in deep shade to the south; the common sweeps round in folds of crimson and russet, with occasional patch of gold when the bracken waves Autumn's flag, or a streak of emerald marks moister soil than the sandy tracts; trees black in shadow, gold and green in the sun, dot the landscape; Dorset lies in blue distance; and beyond the river valley are the hills of the rolling Forest. At the corner of Sopley Common these lanes meet the Wimborne

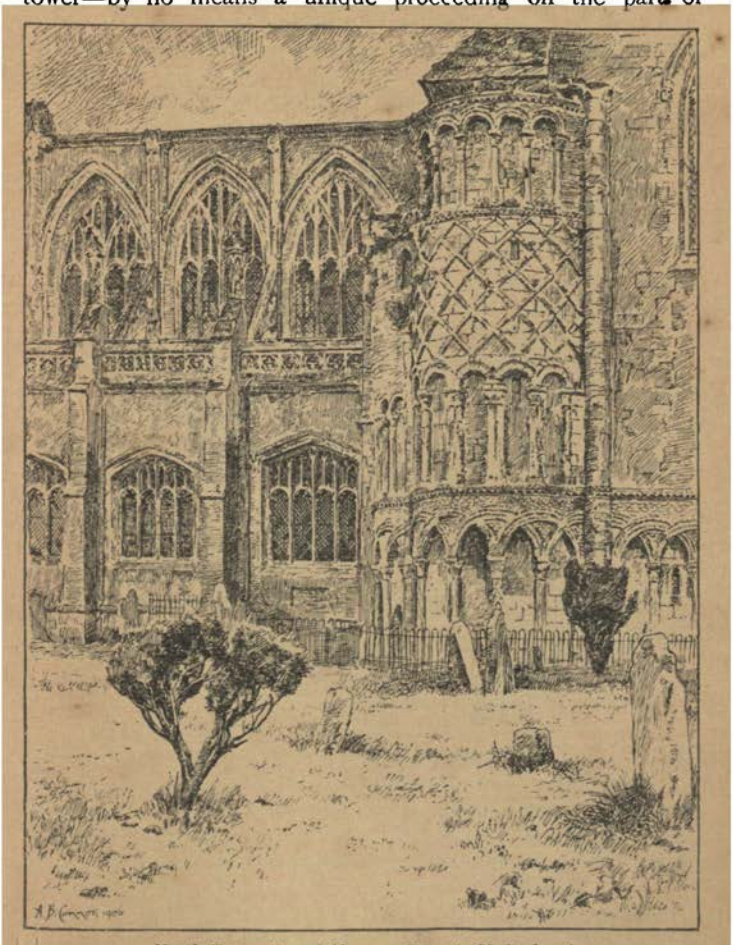
road by Hernbridge Farm, smithy, and mill, where the Moors broadens out into a serenely beautiful lily-crowned pool, and the road beyond to Christchurch even in this land of beauty is notable. The fine yellow surface sweeps under bordering oak and ash bending above bracken-clad banks. On one side fir woods line the slope of St. Catherine's Hill and the thickly-clustered rhododendrons below almost hide the brown carpet of pine needles. The pines stand in rows like great organ pipes, the shadows are profoundly dark, but where the sunlight glances their branches are but just a tone more blue and green than the grey wood-pigeons. Here and there birch, ash, and acacia make contrast, the scarlet berries of the rowan hang heavily above tufts of crimson heather, subtlety of colouring only Nature can blend with her magic of sunshine and atmosphere. On the further side the Stour winds round, flashing silver lights through the trees, gleaming darkly under the brown shadows, laziest of lazy streams. Then it passes by Ilford bridge and through the green meadows to Christchurch where the ruins of a Norman house, with rounded chimney uprising above the ivied walls, lie on the western bank below a knoll crowned with crumbling ruins of massy wall that once were part of Christchurch Castle. Had Bournemouth no other drive than this it had attraction sufficient for many a visitor.

One of the first legends that, to me, is connected with childhood's days, is the story of a little church on a hill in the vale of Severn which by supernatural Powers was thrown down into the valley every night when a-building. We children attributed these doings to the Gentleman whose Chimney juts out from Leckhampton Hill, across the cowslip fields to the north-east. Eventually, the Gloucestershire builders succeeded in erecting the church on its chosen site, and Churchdown or Chosen both Hill and Church remain to this day. I have met the tale in other counties since the days we picnicked and birdsnested, or hunted in Chosen Wood for primroses—none too plentiful in those parts, unlike these—and here by the estuary of two southern rivers the old tale is told again, another point of resemblance between the Avons. The story is here reversed, however, and in this instance the Agency apparently was not of Evil. The builder of the original church designed to place it on the hill top, where the British town and Roman camp had stood, rather than on the low coast lands, for though

somewhat inaccessible to the dwellers in the river valleys the buildings would be less exposed to the sea rovers whose barks put into the sheltered harbour by Hengistbury Head. Not content with one legend the story-tellers of Twynham annexed the apocryphal miracle of the lengthened beam. On the hill not only was the work nightly destroyed, but the beams were too short. On the favoured site the wood lenghtened as required when an Unknown Workman took the work in hand. Now a Holy Beam and a church built by miracles was a paying concern in olden days—one cannot get away from the root of all evil at Christchurch, "the tables of money changers" stand too much in evidence, and you get no further than the entrance without paying in coin of the realm for the privilege. Pay little see little. It is a business concern, the old Priory Church is a certain definite asset, one of the shows of the neighbourhood, and the sightseers who are brought there on the trams from Bournemouth and gape round the ancient fane must pay an entrance as they would at any other raree show. There is no pretence of asking a charity, right hand has to know to a penny what left hand puts in the glass-fronted box. It must be a matter of regret to the authorities that the Holy Beam no longer exists, they could charge an extra sixpence for its exhibition!

Flambard, Red William's extortionate and unscrupulous justiciar, recognised, if tales be true, what a profitable investment the miracle-working Priory might be made, and bargained with the Canons for all its moneys in return for their keep. He, on his part, undertook to build an elaborate church. Christchurch was already an important monastic settlement with a church, nine chapels, and domiciliary buildings, though "old and dilapidated," when Flambard set about its rebuilding. Godric, the head of the establishment, opposed the high-handed politician ineffectually, and the old Saxon monastery was demolished. With William's death came the downfall of his unpopular minister, and Henry I gave Christchurch to Richard de Redvers. But after Flambard was reinstated at Durham de Redvers joined with him in endowing and completing his Priory church, the Norman bays and triforium, with their worn hatchet work, in the nave, the remains of the central tower between the transepts and the crypts that are here to-day. The choir, or monastic church, was destroyed

in the thirteenth century, according to legend by the fall of the tower—by no means a unique proceeding on the part of



North Transept and Norman Turret, Christchurch.

Norman towers it would seem! It is difficult to treat of the present Priory Church as a whole, for a whole it is not, but

remains of three churches. Nor do the modern restorations lessen the disjointed effect; here a new carving copied from Romsey or Durham, Flambard's greatest achievement, there a pillar or window renovated, but no uniform scheme of repair seemingly. However, the building, if a collection of samples and styles, shows very fine samples, and to the student as a study in architectural changes is exceedingly interesting. For the plain man also there is much to note, and none can fail to admire the Norman turret at the east end of the north transept, with its interlaced arcade and exquisite diaper tracery. The large and ugly window alongside cannot detract from the beauty of the lace work though it spoils the picture. Inside the transepts are quite disfigured by unsightly galleries and ugly, high-backed pews of yellow-painted wood that are jammed against the damaged arcading and make a hiding-place for rubbish and worn-out hassocks. From the roof of the north transept there is a fine panorama over the slate roofs and red and grey walls of Christchurch, with the Avon winding down its level valley and under the picturesque old bridge. Westwards among the pines is Bournemouth, and to the east over the flat, grey slabs of the roof patterned with moss and lichen, you get a view of the green ridges of the Forest. The writer can testify that any monk over the average height had a back-breaking job to creep down the winding narrow stair, and the rough stones overhead would deal a nasty blow to the unwary! When the crypt below was opened up it was found to be as full of bones as the well known one at Hythe, in Kent. These were not left in orderly stacks, but duly interred in the churchyard.

After the Norman portions of the building come the Early English clerestory and the great north porch, one of the finest in England. The Decorated period is represented by windows in the south aisle, and the Perpendicular by the Lady chapel, choir, and fine stone rood-screen, also the west end tower wherein hang a couple of ancient bells, each inscribed with two unique leonine hexameters, as the campanologist will know and those unversed in bell mysteries will probably care not for! The tower is absurdly out of proportion with the length of the building, a most ineffective after-thought.

The church was extremely rich in relics, bones, pieces of cloth, wood, hair, and concomitant valuables of more intrinsic wealth; it also enjoyed sundry privileges, was well-endowed

with lands, and was renowned for its charities. Wealthy benefactors when they founded memorial chantries endowed no less than 1,468 masses, and annual doles amounting to some 1,354 loaves, 467 gallons of beer, and 934 dishes of other provender, besides soup! But even in those days of miracles, relics, and rich bequests the Priory had misfortunes, as when Sir William Montague established his family there till William of Wykeham insisted that more suitable quarters must be found. On another occasion some of the canons, "animated by a devilish spirit," plotted robbery on a large scale. The Prior and superiors were to be forcibly ejected and the building rifled, then the con-

Christchurch Priory Church.

spirators would depart with their booty. The Commissioners appointed to inquire into this evil doing gave severe sentences, which the great Bishop revised somewhat. But worse things than rebellious canons and a more disastrous Commission were in store for Christchurch, in 1535–9, for though Cromwell's emissaries "founde the prior a very honest conformeable person," they also found "the house well furnyshyd with juellys and plate whereof some be mete for the Kinges majestie in use." Dr. London noted that "in the churche we finde a chaple and monument curiously made of Cane stone preparyd by the late mother of Raynolde Pole for her buriall wiche we have causyd

to be defacyd and all the arms and badges clerly to be delete." The smug complacency of the rogue! It was rather pleasing after one had read this and tried to picture the damaged stonework in all its original beauty to learn from Abbot Gasquet that the scoundrel thereafter had to do penance[1] "with two smocks on his shoulders," though that was for other iniquities and could not amend the mischief done here. "Conformeable" Prior Draper retired on a pension to the manor house of Somerford Grange; so there was an end of the "Priory Lubbers," as the townsmen, if tradition be true, came to call the Austin Canons. The church, and the graveyard to the north, was given to the Twynham parishioners, more generous

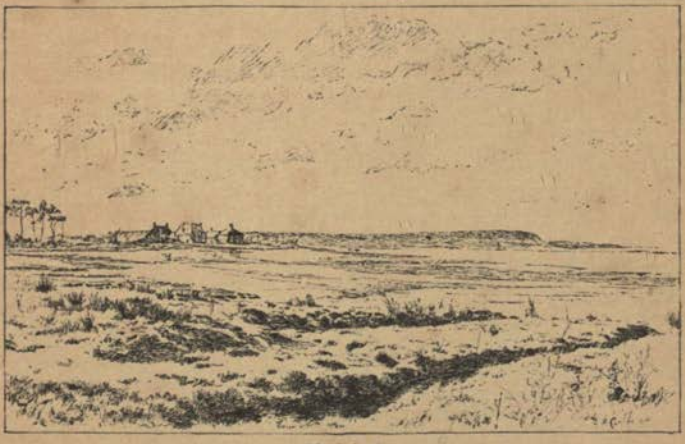
Christchurch Priory from the Ferry.

fortune than attended the dissolution at Romsey; but the cloisters and domestic buildings were destroyed as "superfluous" and the land to the south taken from the Priory, hence the curious fact that in all the big building there is no exit on that side. Destruction came to another memorial from reasons very different. The jewels set in the monument to Sir John Chydioke and his lady may have been wrenched away by iconoclastic fingers, but the chipping which has so defaced the once handsomely-coloured alabaster effigies was the result of a superstitious belief that scrapings from the tomb of "King Chydioke" were sovereign cure for sundry ills that flesh is heir to!

Perhaps the Priory Church is best seen from Hengistbury

[1] *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries.*

Head, or from the road beyond Stanpit Marsh that leads to Mudeford. The reedy marshlands fringe the smooth green turf of the flat meadows, and the old building stands out among the trees where Stour and Avon join, below a line of pines and the houses of Southbourne. The Dorset coast shows faint grey, and the tide comes swiftly in with soft murmuring round the flat-bottomed boats, hides the mud banks, lifts the long rank grasses, and laps up over the ridge of sun-festered weed left by the last storm. Reeds wave over shingle spots, and the sweeping coastline merges away by low, yellow cliffs patched with green where tufts of grass or a gorse bush find footing, to where beyond the clear green-blue



Mudeford.

waters of the bay the jagged outline of the Needles breaks the horizon. Mudeford bid fair at one time to be a popular seaside resort; but fashion forsook its little lodging-houses for the new villas in the young pine woods on the sandy cliffs to the west. So it sleeps along its byway and the hurrying throng pass on to where the fashion of the moment calls them. The lane turns up and near Highcliffe Castle—a fantastic modern building—joins the road to Lymington, through a pleasant, cultivated land by Milton and Downton between the heathery Forest moors, and the strip of thymy turf, with gorse bushes close trimmed by the winds, lying along the low cliffs. But all

this coastland has been invaded by the speculative builder. Scattered about everywhere are painfully new villas and "desirable marine residences." Those that are not TO BE SOLD invariably are TO LET! White boards on low posts announce the existence of Avenues or Parks. Two villas make an Avenue, and the Park probably consists of a double row of seedlings down a loosely-gravelled track! Hotels seem to flourish, and golf links abound. In the summer holidays visitors fill the little villas and cottages; boys and girls, mostly hatless, career around on cycles; Mr. Brown cuts fids out of the turf, and when his ball accomplishes a wobbly thirty yards jeers at Mr. Harris, who has topped his and barely sent it beyond the teeing ground—but their array of clubs is very imposing, and the caddies look quite resigned to fate. And then suddenly you may come on a bit of old roadway, really old, with deep banks and hedges that have little left but their twisted skeletons, so long have they stood against the sea winds' buffets, gorse bushes, tufts of heather hanging spires of tiny purple bells above pits whence the orange gravel has been dug, or spreading over the close herbage in seedling patches; and always the murmur of the blue sea rolling restless below.

The only church of any interest is at Milford, nearly two miles south of the high road, where some of the Norman building remains with Early English and Decorated additions. But if there are no old buildings there are many interesting memories to recall, if only our pages possessed the qualification of a magic carpet and would unroll at will to any limit! In Hordle parish—the old church has disappeared and the churchyard is fast vanishing, also drained away by the encroaching sea—some thirty odd years ago a weird community was established by a *soi-disant* prophetess, Mrs. Girling. At first their eccentric doings attracted crowds from all the neighbourhood, and brakeloads of people from Southampton would drive over on Sunday afternoons to see the Shakers go through their wild performances. At least one convert with some share of this world's goods, to balance a deficiency in mental endowment, was victimised by the founder of this new creed. But as novelty wore off there was less to attract the hysterical, funds dwindled and the faith of the devotees dwindled also; and though some lingered on in destitute condition the death of the organiser was the death also of the sect.

Much too of interest might be gathered from the old books in the Christchurch borough chest of life in the sleepy town during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In previous records the borough is singularly deficient, and though the cartulary of the Priory has been preserved[1] the parish books returned to "base uses" and made kettle holders for a thrifty curate's wife! The town was a borough immemorially.

"Here's prosperation
To our Corporation"

ran the toast in old days when mayor and burgesses feasted—unless they were libelled by a neighbouring town, where the rhyme was repeated to me! But charters it has none, though visited by at least four kings—John, Henry VII, Edward VI, and George III. The last-named more than once paid a visit to his friend, Sir George Rose of Cuffnalls and Mudeford, the "old Georgy" of Cobbett and the Radicals. Sir George Tapps of Hinton Admiral competed with Rose for control of the borough, and the jest went round that the electors "preferred drinking at *Tapps* to smelling at *Roses*." William Stewart Rose, the Baronet's brother, built himself a cottage at Mudeford, and Lockhart, in his *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, quotes some lines Rose wrote to commemorate a visit from Sir Walter. Scott was then writing *Marmion*, and sent "several sheets of the MS. and corrected proofs of Canto iii . . . under covers franked from Gundimore by Mr. Rose." The Red King and Ytene's oaks are mentioned in the Introduction. Two years later he contributed a "Fragment"—"The Poacher"—to the *Edinburgh Annual Register* that tells how very much to his undoing:—

"In Malwood-walk young Mansell watched the deer."

In 1798 Southey took a cottage at Burton, on the road to Sopley, attracted by the quiet of the neighbourhood, and for two years was busy there with his *English Eclogues* and other work. The wild moors of the Forest must have reminded him of the heathery stretches on his native Quantocks. Lamb too was a visitor, though he was no lover of the country; London, as Hazlitt wrote, was "his fairyland,

[1] In the Cottonian Library, British Museum.

teeming with wonder." Lord Radnor had Southey returned in 1826 as Member for his Wiltshire borough of Downton, but the poet's estate not being of the requisite value, he was shortly afterwards disqualified.

As Christchurch swamped Twynham, the old town, so in its turn is it being swallowed up by the huge seaside health-resort that has sprung up within the last seventy years on the sand cliffs that stretch from Christchurch Harbour to Dorset. In this county of world-old memories and venerable relics of a long dead past Bournemouth is an absolute anomaly, except

St. Peter's, Bournemouth, from the Gardens.

as an outgrowth from the riverside settlement, a very mushroom growth. Even the pines that overrun the neighbourhood are a modern introduction—rather, it should be said, re-introduction, for they do flourish where pines grew in geologic times, though the native forest vanished prehistorically, and only the fossil remains on the foreshore tell of fir-woods at the mouth of the Bourne when it was a tributary of the river Solent. A hundred years ago, when the fir plantations were started on the rough wild waste of sand and heather by "Coypond," it was as desolate a corner as any in the county, and when at the begin-

ning of Queen Victoria's reign Sir George Tapps Gervis, of Hinton Admiral, decided to build on his property by the Bourne, only Mr. Tregonwell's house near the decoy pond and a few cottages existed where to-day amid the pines spread the terraces and shops, gardens and promenades, hotels and villas, every variety of brick and stucco building, straggling in lengthening rows that daily encroach upon the gorse and heather of the sand dunes, join up outlying districts, and make the surrounding villages in turn into suburbs.

So established is Bournemouth's popularity that some courage is needful to confess to have found it ever dreary and depres-

Bournemouth from the East Cliff.

sing! Yet when the dank sea mist wraps round the sad remnants of pine plantations, and never a mouthful of air penetrates to the shut-in valleys, it is one of the most cheerless and sombre places it has ever been my lot to live in. Even the heather looks dark and toneless, and the dripping pines can be the acme of melancholy! But one forgets November days when the sun floods the beautiful bay and the blue waters dance below the cliffs, with their crown of golden gorse; and though the sandy track that runs along East Cliff from the pier to Boscombe, is less pleasant underfoot for a saunter than Folkestone's grassy Leas, and at the same time no freer from the trammels of fashion, you get the same fine effect of sea-

scape below you, and a sunset over Poole Harbour may hold its own with one over Sandgate Roads and Romney Marsh, for if there is no Shorncliffe to rise dark above the reflected glories in the bay below, there is—literally on the other hand—the Island with its wonderful white cliffs and the ragged Needles to make a finish on the eastern horizon.

Very characteristic features of this coast are the chines or bunnies, the narrow gorges down which the Forest streams make their way to the sea. Boscombe Chine is now swept and garnished, with trimmed lawns and gravelled pathways, yet there be others not far away where Nature riots untrammelled, and along the low cliffs the geologist finds many a treasure, for Barton and Hordle Cliffs are famous for their fossils. The eastward sweep of the bay ends with the long pebble ridge that juts out to Hurst Castle, built, it is said, like Cowes and Calshot, of stone from Beaulieu Abbey, and one of the prisons of that most unhappy King, Charles I. A small closet in the wall, on the second story of the keep, is shown as the room in which he was confined when brought from Carisbrooke in the winter of 1648. Thence they went by Romsey to Winchester, "through the narrow passage, three long miles well-nigh from Hurst to Milford." This ridge is a miniature Chesil Beach, without the relief of Chesil's masses of sea pinks. Sea pinks there are, but not in such profusion, and among the golden brown reed-beds sea-lavender, sea-starwort, and claret-coloured patches of glasswort spread over the salt marshes that stretch away on the east to Calshot, and up Southampton Water. But to the west only the shingle bank fronts the sea, half-circled by the low cliffs, and guarded by the Needles and the distant headlands of Dorset that close round Poole. Day after day you may see it spread like a huge lake, now of polished steel, now of sapphire and beryl, anon playing at wrath with cold grey sky lowring over the white-flecked waters chopping into mimic waves. But it can also show long rollers with rhythmic swing and ponderous reverberance when a sou'-wester drives the spring tides thundering up on the pebbles, and sweeps the spray from the curling wave-tops, like a ragged beard dashed aside from a yawning lip that strains to engulf the narrow barrier, until the green and gold of the marshes is wrapt in a soft salt drifting haze. That roar, like the thud and hum of vast machines, which carries inland till miles away it

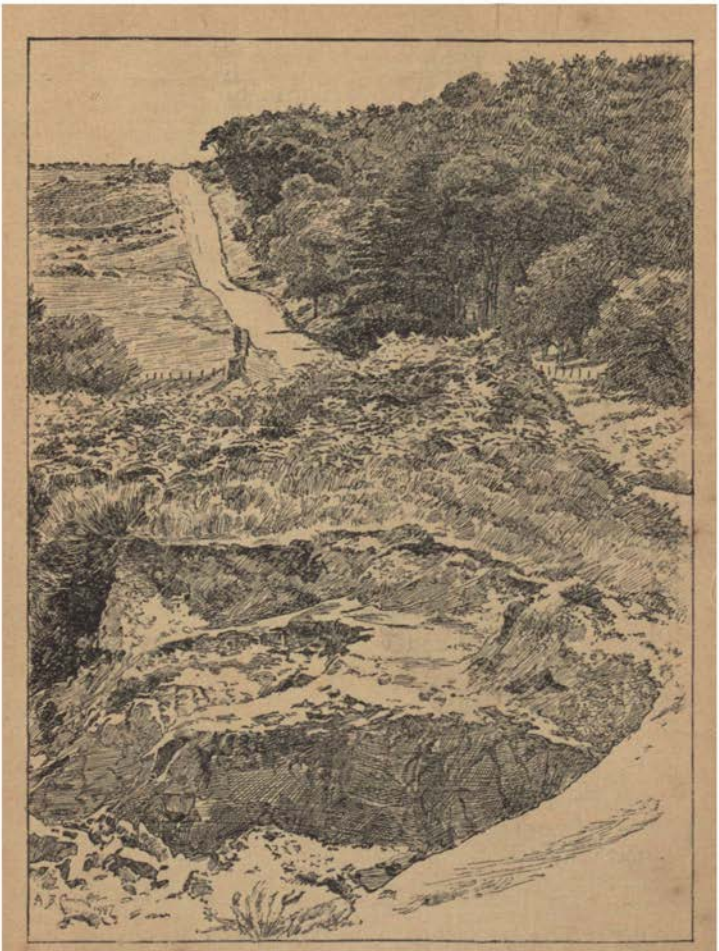
dies in hollow echoes among the Forest trees, is the down-drawn swirl of captured pebbles dragged hither and thither by the remorseless sea. You may know the Solent for years and never hear its deepest diapason, know it till you think that changeful sea and coast have yielded all their secrets to your persistent search, and then one day you may hear a new sound in the call of the Atlantic combers driven up Channel and prisoned in the narrow straits. The storm that drives them may never have touched this corner, not a cloud fleck the blue, hardly a breath stir the rushes on the mud banks, but the great swell heaves sullenly up and foams over the low ridge. On come the long, wide wales of water, rising, rising, till with a toss of snowy spray that prisons the rainbow the glassy-green walls gape, totter, and roll over in a confused churn and smother. Exquisitely beautiful that creamy foam tossed on to the shimmering orange of the drenched pebbles, fairy snowbanks that vanish ere their beauty is half realised. Exquisitely beautiful, and exquisitely cruel, for the water beneath those frothy bubble-wreaths percolates ever through the loose surface and saps out the very life and backbone of the land. Nought more hideous than the tragedies hid beneath the incomparable sea, alike friend and traitor, truest ally and direst tyrant.

CHAPTER XVIII

LYMINGTON

WHEN Sir Harry Burrard brought a bill before Parliament for the making of a road from Lyndhurst to Lymington there existed but the tracks cut by forest carts, and the rough paths made by smugglers, deer-stealers, moss troopers and other such light-heeled gentry; and so unsafe was the country for more peaceable wayfarers from Southampton to Salisbury and the Dorset border, that no lady ever ventured forth without well-armed riders to protect her, and travellers from Ringwood or Southampton always had a guide. Now, not to mention the railway, a fine road runs through Brockenhurst with no greater danger than a sharpish pitch down after passing Battramsley Cross, under trees that make a turn of the way both dark and puzzling to the ignorant by night and—tending to dampness—somewhat greasy in wet weather.

From Brockenhurst the ground rises to where Setley Plain spreads westwards, flanking a good road that runs by Wilverley Post, on the Christchurch-Lyndhurst road, to Burley; "dull and uninteresting" one told me, and possibly so for those to whom open heather-clad spaces and wide sky-scapes have no attractions—put it down to individual defect, for but few miles in Hamphire lack interest or beauty; and certainly none in the Forest. The very names whisper of forgotten histories, and the low mounds, as on this Setley Plain, tell of bygone tragedies. What has the Plain seen since first the jealous seas retreated from the Hampshire Basin? Was it a peaceful settlement, or did Latchmoor get its name in sooth from *lytten*, being a garden of the dead, when, in the dim past of which history gives only fragmentary echoes, some bloody battle



"On the road to Lymington."

for the coast-lands was fought hereabouts? It would seem so, for there, to the south-west, beyond Sway Common and Arnwood—the Arnwood, by the way, of Marryat's *Children of the New Forest* –the peaceful stream that winds its way sea-

ward by Milford and the marshes of Keyhaven, bears name that perpetuates the memory of strife, and but yesterday the country folk would tell you that once the Danestream ran red with blood, whilst the glossy capsules of the tutsan, locally "touchen leaves," were believed to have gained their sanguine hue from the same cause. Also Newtown, over the narrow sea-way, tells of a harrying and burning along the coasts by Danes under Sweyn in the first six years of the eleventh century. As for beauty, to me this country is always beautiful. Who shall gainsay the imperial glory of blossoming heather? But even when autumn has dulled the crimson and russet, and the distances are hid in lowering clouds, on such a day, in fact, as is of all days dreary, I have watched the rain sweep over, blotting out the wintry gleam of sunshine that had caught the dark corner of Set Thorns enclosure and made Sway Tower a pencil of light against the leaden clouds that hid the Island, and have wondered amid the voices of the storm how scenes so changeful could ever be dubbed "monotonous." This was wild melancholy, yet but the night before the sun, sinking behind massed purple clouds, had cast a gold maze over the heath, through which the curling smoke from some gipsy encampment rose like incense to the roof of blue darkness; to-morrow, again, may bring clear horizons, warm colour in heather and bracken, and yellow glints where a gorse bush breaks into flower.

Sway Tower, which is a landmark all round these parts, is one of the Hampshire Follies—Peterson's in particular. It rises gaunt and clear from a cottage garden, and all the winds of Heaven sweep through its unglazed windows and up the hollow stairway. Spread out below, almost like a view from a balloon, are the coast levels, the Solent and the Island southwards, and north the undulating ridges and open plains of the Forest. The story goes that it was built for a place of sepulture, Mrs. Peterson being provided with a smaller one in the vicinity, and that when first erected a light was placed in the top. This light, visible all up and down the Solent, spread consternation and confusion amongst the shipping. Next day brought prohibitive message from the Admiralty, without resort to any devious processes of red tape, that the new lighthouse, unorthodox and unauthorised, should burn its light no more.

Eastwards of the main road the unfenced stretches of Setley

Common—where gorse and broom and heather mass gold and brown, green and purple, orange and grey, as rule the seasons—are broken by copse and cultivated land sloping down to the valley of the Highland Water, long ere this become the Boldre or Lymington River. The highroad runs by wooded hills and sharp dips, one of which, near Buckland Rings, has the somewhat greasy gradient aforementioned, south for another mile or thereabouts to Lymington; but to the left by Sandy Down, where between clumps of blue-green firs the long shoots of the young broom wave in a heavy fringe over the heather, and gorse clumps border the open track, a lane leads down to Boldre, cut most deceptively just before the bridge by a gateway on the further side of a lane that crosses and loops back to Brockenhurst, or on under the cool shade of spreading oaks and elms to rejoin the Lymington highroad hard by the railway bridge: the road to Boldre runs through the gate. In truth it is not always easy for the stranger to determine whether these gates over the road are merely Forest boundaries or limits to the right of way: here, for instance, the old red brick mill-house, seen between its clustering oaks in the hollow below, adds to the deception, the gate and road might well be the entrance to private grounds.

Beyond the river a narrow lane leads up the wooded hill to Boldre Church, hidden among ash and elm—sign that the Forest has lost its hold, for elms, they say, grow only on cultivated lands. The church, dedicated to St. John, dates back to very early times, before the Domesday Survey, but the original was rebuilt in the thirteenth century, and restored some sixty years ago. It has more literary than historical interest, for the author of *Forest Sketches*, William Gilpin, was vicar; Warner, a county historian, was curate here; and that voluminous writer Southey, four years before his death in 1843, was married within its walls to Caroline Bowles, a writer of some note, still remembered for the charm of her *Chapters on Churchyards*. Her cottage stands near the road by the old Roman earthworks known as Buckland Rings. According to a contemporary writer, Mr. Gilpin found things in a sad way at Boldre, "utterly neglected by their former pastor, and exposed to every temptation of pillage and robbery from their proximity to the deer, the game, and the fuel of the forest, these poor people were little better than a herd of

banditti "—no unusual state in many a village and hamlet on the borders of waste lands, woods, and rough commons, even more recently than 1777. If, as his epitaph asserts, the vicar and his wife expected with a "new joy to meet several of their good neighbours" in "a state of joyful immortality," by all accounts Gilpin did much to secure that happy end: nor were the poor "herd of banditti" the only ones whose reformation he sought, for it is on record that a wealthy farmer in the neighbourhood, notorious for his scandalous doings, after many a warning from the zealous vicar, with appeals to amend the

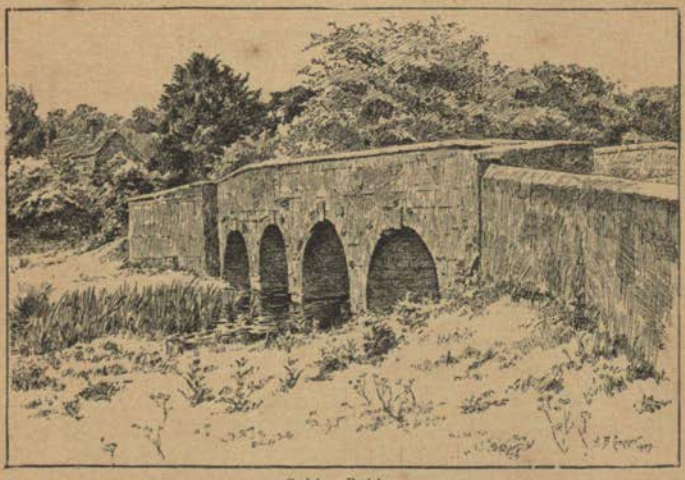
Boldre Church.

evil of his ways, was banned in the spiritual Court, and sentence of excommunication only suspended on condition he did public penance. Rich yeoman and frail woman, in face of an immense congregation, duly avowed their sin and contrition in the penitential garb of white sheets. Let us hope it was summer-time for the sake of the erring fair!

However, it is Gilpin's literary merit rather than his pastoral efforts posterity is most concerned with. A contemporary of Gilbert White, he was in the van of modern writers who hold their country indebted for the gift of books on local scenery and

natural history. Not so simple as White, "eternally agape at cataracts and thunder," a reviewer once complained, yet, during his thirty years in this village, writing often in the wood adjoining the vicarage, he did for the Forest much what White did for Selborne. It would seem, though, that he knew more of natural history and the management of his parish than of art, for he considered Hogarth failed as an artist through his ignorance of composition!

Boldre village is a half mile away to the south and the trimly thatched cottages straggle along the twisty lane to Pilley Street



Boldre Bridge.

and Pilley Bailey, beyond which lies the wild expanse of Beaulieu Heath. At Boldre another bridge crosses the Lymington River, which from here flows through the marshy bottom of a narrow valley flanked by low hills. In front of the smithy near by foresters and farming folk foregathered on Sundays long gone, with horses and ponies, to consult the local farrier-vet. Busy and gay enough the quiet valley must have looked with forty or fifty ponies tied up by the bridge, while the owners lounged around, gossiping, smoking, and exchanged Forest news or smugglers' tales. It is gay now in the summer sunshine when the river slips lazily by, hardly

swaying the yellow lilies between their great, green discs of leaves, and reflecting the bordering grass and the white, pink and yellow of yarrow, willowherb and ragwort that deck the shelving bank; but the old gossips yonder have gone, the Forest ponies no longer kick and scuffle, and whinney out the horse-talk of the Forest to each other, and only an aged man now and again will descant in the security of some half forgotten old inn parlour on the exciting doings and dangers of those "good old days," and the exploits of smuggling heroes.

Coming to Lymington from Beaulieu the road runs direct over some four miles of heath. Across these rough spaces in olden days travellers took as landmark, once night fell on them, the lights in Walhampton House, so primitive was the track, and indistinguishable among the gorse brakes and heather. The creeper-covered house stands in an angle of the road, and was the home for many generations of Burrards, a family more intimately connected with the history of Lymington than any other. The name, spelt as variously as most old names managed to be, is said to have been of Saxon origin, and first occurs in the south of Hampshire when in 1397 a John Borard was appointed Prior of Christchurch. From the time when George Burrard's name is first on the existing roll of burgesses, the name is never absent from the town records. Son succeeded father, nephew uncle, as burgess, mayor, and member of Parliament.[1]

Lymington was a borough "by prescription"; the rights dated "beyond the memory of man," that is, before the days of Richard I. When Queen Elizabeth granted Parliamentary representation to the burgesses it happened that a Burrard was mayor, and so could do much to insure the return of his nominee, and also his successor in the mayoralty, for the outgoing mayor named one of the three from whom the burgesses must select the next holder of that office, and a name once impannelled on the Pricking Book remained until the owner thereof donned the mayor's robes, or was removed from mortal scenes. Moreover, the mayor had much influence in the election of burgesses, and as only the burgesses were entitled to Parliamentary as well as Municipal vote, it followed that the party most successful in securing the civic lead gained also

[1] cf. *Annals of Walhampton* by Sidney Burrard, Lt.-Col. Late Grenadier Guards. London, 1874.

the upper hand politically, as they would elect their own supporters, and enroll their friends as honorary burgesses. This restricted franchise was, needless to say, a grievance to the inhabitants at large, and led to a long-standing quarrel between the burgess and non-burgess parties, as at Southampton, which came to a head when the latter elected their own representatives in opposition to the two chosen by the burgess voters. Three times did this occur, but the return was disallowed on appeal.

But the Burrards were soldiers and sailors as well as politicians. The second Sir Harry, after forty-one years in the 60th Rifles, 14th Foot, and 1st Foot Guards, but little or no active service, had command of a Brigade under Cathcart in the Copenhagen Expedition of 1807, and was afterwards given a Baronetcy. Fate had been kinder to Sir Harry had he never again donned uniform, but politicians, to suit their own ends, gave him and Sir Hew Dalrymple command in the Peninsula over Moore and Wellington. There was no reason against Burrard's appointment but the fatal defect of lacking experience, not only in the field but in command of any large force of combined arms. His two juniors in rank and years were, on the other hand, comparatively age-old in experience, and had conned the pages of war's stern lexicon in camp and on battlefield, and mastered its science by long apprenticeship and practical experiment. The senior officers' mistakes were those to be expected under the circumstances. The campaign of 1808 ended, as all know, with the Convention of Cintra, and thereafter the Generals returned to face the storm of vituperation that an ignorant populace seems ever to have in store for those who officer the Army when they fail to achieve impossibilities. Yet, as Napier points out, the blame lay not with the veteran to whom Nature, granting an average share of gifts, denied the rare spark of genius that alone could win success on the hazard, but, as in many a case before and since, with the political intriguants who for their own purposes make party counters of the very safeguards of the Nation.

From Walhampton, in the year 1770, a white-robed procession came by the light of flickering torches in the hush of midnight. Strange hour for a bridal—but Death was the Groom. The story is not yet forgotten, and a few centuries before would have passed into legend, to be hereafter mis-

doubted by the wise and learned. Paul Burrard early in the eighteenth century pulled down the old house and built what is now the centre of the mansion. His son, Sir Henry, added the octagon and drawing-rooms. He had but one surviving child, a daughter, endowed with all the gifts and beauty that so frequently accompany fragile health. The youthful heiress was to make her bow to Society at a big ball, given in the new rooms, but, the evening before, when the house-party was engaged with country dances, Laura was missed. If no tale of mistletoe bough and oak chest, this has end as tragic. Fatigued by the dancing and excitement the young girl had stolen away from her merry friends, and, when the puzzled searchers found her, was lying in a pool of blood on the floor of her room. Everything was done that the skill of the times could devise and money compass, but nothing availed to stay the mischief —a broken blood-vessel—and though a faithful servant rode express to town for some fancied remedy, and did the 168 odd miles in record time, the young life had ebbed before the possible cure was to hand. So when night's shroud lay deep on the land the heiress who should have been belle of the ball was borne thus in ghostly fashion to Lymington for burial.

Another funeral, that of Sir Harry Burrard-Neale, last but one of the Walhampton Burrards, must also have been an imposing sight. So well-known and respected was the Admiral that the numbers who flocked to do him the last honours made it practically a public funeral when the old Squire, who had been a messmate of the Sailor King, and later did so much to arrest the Mutiny at the Nore as to be thenceforth known as the Sailors' Friend, was borne to rest with his forefathers by "twenty-four poor labouring men," in accordance with his special desire. The additional surname of Neale had been assumed on his marriage with Grace Elizabeth, co-heiress of a Wiltshire Squire of that name. They had no children, but Lady Burrard-Neale adopted her maid's young sister, and eventually the girl's good looks and my lady's patronage secured the hand of M. Reboul, a Paris banker. Their eldest son, Henry Neale Reboul, was chosen by the childless widow as heir to what money it was in her power to will away, about £20,000, this being augmented by ten thousand through the shrewd old lady threatening her cousin and heir-at-law, a Neale, she should remarry, and could then leave her estates to her husband for life. The family record

does not say if young Reboul was the suggested bridegroom! Possibly that might account for the compromise, as Lady Neale had passed the "three score and ten" by half a decade.

Nor is this Lymington's only story of romantic fortune, for not eighteen years before Sir Harry brought his bride to Walhampton, the Lord Chancellor's brother, Thomas Thurlow, who lived to be bishop of Durham, wed Nancy Beere, servant to a Mrs. Hackman, in Lymington, a highly esteemed and virtuous damsel, and their eldest son Edward in 1806 succeeded to his uncle's title. Lady Burrard-Neale doubtless heard the tale, for the Beeres, though fallen upon evil times, were an old Lymington family.

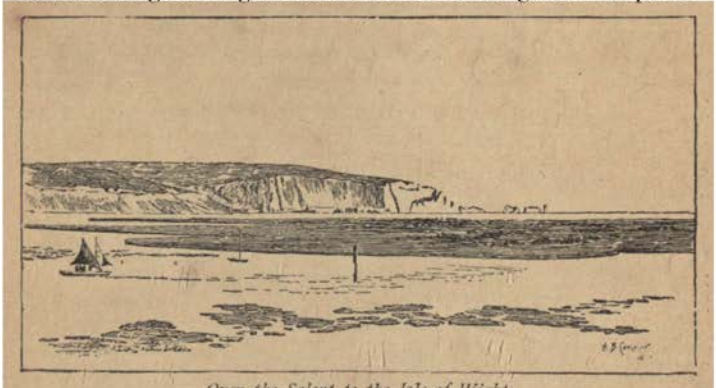
But we tarry too long from our objective, Lymington, though, did space permit, there be many yarns to tell of Royal visitors and junketings, stormy stories of election doings, and old-time hospitality when the Walhampton and Pilewell coaches, with their long-tailed Flemish mares, went round to gather the ladies of the neighbourhood for a dance or a dinner. So to the road once more, along which many a gay cavalcade has ridden, and many a generation of Burrards passed on their last journey, to where the Lymington River gleams blue-grey between its beds of golden rushes, and the toll-gate by the bridge gives a moment's delay to glance at the little harbour and the broad marshes stretching seawards.

Once Lymington was a notable port. There is none of the bustle of success nowadays, nothing is in a hurry save, perchance, a passing motor. The seagulls circle with lazy grace overhead, and with the ebbing tide the river drops away from its flat mud-banks through the grey ooze with oily curves in a hundred rills and channels, or, rising with the flow, floats the long trails of wrack-grass ere it drowns them and swirls back round the deserted rushes. A hammering from the further bank, a spurt of steam, or the soft scriss-scriss of a saw draws attention to the fact that yachts are still built and harboured here. The train comes leisurely from station to pier-head, where the small steamers wait for their periodic half-hour journey down the tortuous channel between the mud-banks and over the Solent to Wight. There is, in fact, nothing in the quiet scene more typical than the lonely building on a spur that juts out from the east bank, halfway between the bridge and the little pier. That, it is almost too

absurd to smile at even, was built to be the Lymington theatre!

Southampton sapped her trade[1]; Cheshire outdid her salt industry; Bournemouth attracts the fashionable throngs, "the large and opulent families" who, not a century ago, were turned from her doors for lack of sufficient lodging accommodation; well may her bells declaim, "Poor, proud, Lymington, come down!" So Lymington, off the main route of life, has become a byway of existence. Actually her roads are excellent.

The bridge over the river was built by a Captain Cross in 1731, on the strength of a grant of the mudflats along the Hampshire



Over the Solent to the Isle of Wight.

coast to the heirs of one Robert Pamplin. There was opposition from the town, for the burgesses feared the proposed structure would interfere with the ebb and flow of the tide and the harbour become silted up. To a certain extent they argued correctly, for dredging operations are continually necessary to keep free the channel to the quayside, but it resulted in the reclamation of much of the marshland from the wasteful sea.

The town itself stands at the edge of the higher land shelving to the low coast marshes and the river estuary. Half-

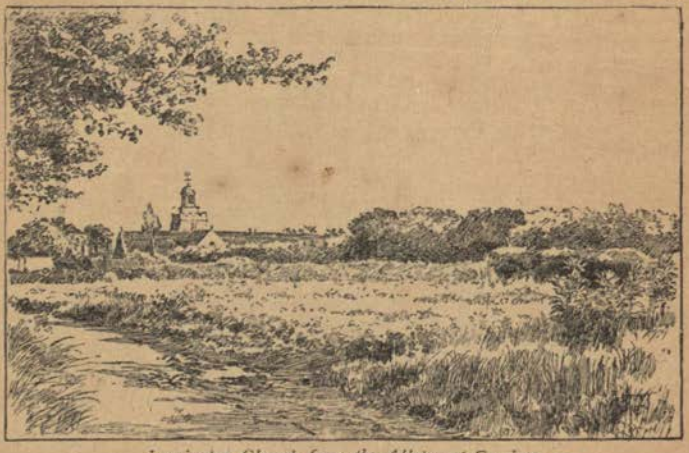
[1] In the days when all foreign goods must by law be landed at Southampton much trade was not only drawn from Lymington, but what remained was crippled to a considerable extent, and the town declined, despite tardy permission for dutiable merchandise to pay Customs at Lymington.

way down the broad main street has a sudden and steep dip eastwards, and turns at right angles on either side. If it has no noteworthy architectural points, there is much of quaintness, and histories lurk at every corner, from the ivy-covered church, topped by a truly Georgian cupola, along the row of irregular houses that have replaced the "wattle and dab" of older days, to where among the Walhampton woods beyond, on the hill above the river, rises a white "pillar of Egyptian architecture," erected to the memory of Sir Harry Burrard-Neale. The houses of the old borough of 1150 gathered by the quay, and the new borough of 1240 up the incline as far as the church; but now, like so many towns, Lymington has spread westwards, reaching Pennington, where new brick cottages have sprung up on the edge of the common beside the thatched and colour-washed ones of other dates. It would rouse a more than passing wonder why even in these "penny-wise-pound-foolish" days the owners do not plaster their raw terra-cotta novelties, and at the same time increase their durability and hide their crudeness under the creamy yellows and dull pinks that tone so exceeding well with the weathered roofs and broken tiles of the older buildings, were not beauty and durability alike anathema to the jerry builder.

If tradition is to be believed the church was gutted by Roundhead troopers, but there is no written evidence that I wot of. Probably the building, old and dilapidated, needed nothing more than neglect to bring it to ruin; still, whatever the cause, but little of the structure and no records exist of date prior to the Restoration. All that is certain is that Puritan and Royalist between them brought the town to "extreme povertie and necessitous condition." But one curious survival of the past remained through every change: daily at the accustomed hour the church bell sounded, though that it always had been rung was the only known reason for the custom till the present incumbent reinstituted morning service and gave again to the bell the old meaning for its message. The lime walks are said to have been in existence as early as the middle of the seventeenth century, and the oldest tombstones may date from the same period. The size of the ground is some testimony of its age, and the silent rows bear record of the vicissitudes of the town, with names of families decayed and forgotten, of residents still in the locality or strangers from oversea, refugees

and soldiers, atoms swept hither by the stormy fate of nations. One such stone is witness of an event, talked of to this day, on Pennington Common, where the County Militia or Fencibles yearly assembled. "There was a duel fought here" is information proudly given to any inquirer about Pennington's history. Details are not forthcoming further than, as the stone sets forth, that the victim was John Dieterich, late Lieutenant and Adjutant of the Foreign Depôt—but not to mention the duel would be, in Pennington's eyes, to show crass ignorance of local history!

After the church was enlarged, in 1756, 1792 and 1814,



Lymington Church from the Allotment Gardens.

the additional seats were sold,[1] and the Parish Book not only gives details of the sales, but of the purchase of such adjuncts

[1] The document of one such sale was shown me, and is worth note :—

"Whearas in the year of our Lord 1753 the Church of this Parish was, under a Faculty from the Lord Bishop of the Diocese) enlarged in the North West part of the same, and sundry new Pews erected for the accomodation of the parishioners—

Which said Pews or Seats were by the Churchwardens, Sold to sundry persons, towards defraying the expence of the said work ; Among which the Seat or Pew bearing No. 9 was Sold to william Pitt, his Executors, Administrators, and Assigns for ever—

and whereas the said William Pitt, did in his lifetime Sell and dispose of all his rights and property in the said Seat or Pew to Mr. Richard Hayward

as "a bottle of peppermint and biskets" to enliven the proceedings! and sometimes it was specially mentioned that the pew commanded a fine view through the windows.

Originally the churchyard blocked the High Street and only a narrow lane passed on to The Tything and Pennington Common, by what is now the upper part of the main road. This is shown in pictures as late as the end of the eighteenth century. Further down the old thoroughfare was again interrupted, from 1720 till 1858, by a town hall that stood at the top of the hill, just as St. Clement Danes makes an island in the Strand to this day. Westwards ran the fleshers' shops, and up to within the last century and a half the butchers killed their beasts in the open street! There was certainly no pretence at sanitary arrangement or precautions in those days when the rain cut channels in the hillside and washed the refuse, that had accumulated since the last downpour, to the river under the stone bridge which led to the quay. Think of it! All the town wells in the middle of that road! No wonder the burgesses' nerves were unsettled when plague stalked over the land. Probably the pigs helped to remove the garbage, for, as an order in the reign of Elizabeth ruled that "no man's or woman's hogge shall go within the New Town unringed and unyoked," the animals were evidently accustomed to wander there, except on Saturdays, when the market was held, and the presence of pigs, other than as merchandise, prohibited!

Lymington's earliest charter—it never held one from the

of this parish, and whereas, He is is since that time Deceased, Therefore the Executors of the said Richard Hayward did on the 19th day of March 1810, With other his Effects, Sell and dispose of the said Pew or Seat, By public Auction—which at that time was purchased by James Hapgood of this parish for the sum of Twenty one pounds and five shillings (He being the highest bidder)

Now We the present Church Wardens, in order to prevent any disputes in future concerning the said Pew or Seat, Do hereby acknowledge the said Pew or Seat to be the property of the said James Hapgood, his Executor, Administrator, and assigns for ever, and have for that purpose caused this entry to be made in our church Book.

In Wittness whereof we have Sett our hands this 3rd day of May 1810—

Jarvis Harker
William Noake } Church Wardens.

Witness—W. Huse, Vestry Clerk."

Crown—was the one from Baldwin de Redvers, granting the burghers their freedom on condition that they undertook their own defence. This obligation incurred to share in the National Defence is a point not to be overlooked in these days, when the question of each man's duty to qualify himself for such share demands recognition as something above mere party tactics. We are ready enough to seize our privileges, yet too often seek to shirk our responsibilities and wilfully confound duty and sentiment. But the Lymington burgesses of the mediæval days had sterner tutor than sentiment, and when they conceded to the Abbot of Beaulieu and his vassals from Sowley and Norley the right "to buy and sell free of toll" in the town, it was on a like condition of aid in matters of defence. They had their questions of Army and Tariff Reform even in those days! And, as they were of like flesh and blood with ourselves, we find them later doing their share of shirking, though not in a matter so vital as defence, for an entry of 1607 records:—

"Forasmuch also that the Maior and Burgysses for the most p'te are not so assistinge and wynninge together, concerninge the rule and government of the said towne, as they oughte, by reason of wiche the Inhabitants, through the instigacon of idell and lewde p'sons, are altogether contemtious, and growne into a rebellious kinde of lyfe and behaviour. Yt is nowe ordered and decreed . . . for a reformacon thereof to be had, that from henceforth all the Burgysses . . . shall from tyme to tyme give their attendaunce and assemblye . . . for and concerninge anie busines touchinge the Towne" *or* "he shall forfeite and loose for the first time vj s. viij d. . . . and for the seconde offence shalbe dismissed of his Burgysshippe for ever."

In 1622 there were further enactments to the same effect. Such a state of indiscipline amongst the leaders, argues badly for the probable state of *moral* among Lymington's defenders had the stern days of the French wars, when French fleets harried the coast and thrice burnt the town, broken out again before Cromwell had made for England what she seldom if ever else has possessed—an Army!

Luckily for Lymington and England—for that matter it were not exaggeration to say for the world the hosts of Spain in their "Infallible" Armada were already more than half defeated, in that they had been forced into the position least favourable to themselves by their keen-witted adversaries, when they passed on the southern side of the Island, Lord Howard and

his grand old sea-dogs snarling at the heels of the lumbering Invincibles with a bite worse than had ever been their bark. Though the story of the Armada is, after all, little enough connected with Hampshire, except that her Island saw some of the fighting from afar, she had her share in the national apprehension and the loyal outburst that so confounded foreign plotters, misjudging the noisy treason of a few to be test of the nation's bent, as have many of their kidney before and since to their own undoing. The Lord Lieutenant of this County of Southampton was, like the Lord High Admiral of the Fleet, one of a staunch Catholic family, but none the less determinedly opposed to any foreign invader, come they with never so many Papal sanctions and blessings; so he, as right heartily as any, mustered the local contingents, the militia and the trained bands, which, in Sir John Hawkins' Returns of the quota of each county, are entered with a total of 2,478 "Armed," of whom 806 were "Trained," 1,672 "Untrained," 1,000 "Pioneers," and with no less than 374 "Petronels"—more than treble the number of any other county, Denbighshire, queerly enough, coming next with 100, and Kent, whose totals else exceeded even London's, having none. But the menace passed. "God blew with His wind and they were scattered," as Elizabeth's medal commemorates. The Forest ponies, according to local tradition, have in them a strain of Spanish blood from the horses that swam ashore,—

"*But where are the galleons of Spain?*"

Lymington had her share of the alarms and anxieties. According to the *Towne Booke* the "Monney Layde out" in 1588 included xij*d.* "Led out for taking notice of Sir Edward Hoppy, Night, mershall Commessham"—presumably martial commission—"for writing of orders for the semen vj*d.*" and various items connected with "the to ferst mousters" and "the last gynnerall" one, not forgetting sundry "Quertes" of liquor to be provided for the musters, items never lacking at any Lymington function! The liquor and anxiety were evidently too much for the scribe, for, as a local historian[1] notes, this page was long labelled "Cannot be read." It does need the aid of imagination to extract sense from some of it. And

[1] King, *Old Times Revisited.*

reason enough had the Lymington burghers for their trepidation, as not a few must have recalled the black days of 1545, when the French raiders left the town in ruins. But war came not again to ruffle the little seaport with aught much more palpitating than its trappings, and if the tramp of armed men was yet to resound in its streets the chief damage done was probably to the susceptible hearts of Lymington's daughters! The Civil War affected her but little in comparison with her neighbours.

The Puritan tendencies of the town are shown early in the seventeenth century by sundry enactments with regard to "abusinge the sacred name of Almightie God by vaine swearinge and blaspheminge," and to prevent "prophanation of the Lordes daie" it was decided "annie frayte, to be transported from this towne into the Isle of Wight uppon the Saboth Day" should pay a fine of ij*d.* "to the use of the poore." This influence is commemorated in two inn signs, the Anchor of Hope and the Lion and Lamb, ironically enough, for its initial outcome in the seventeenth century was a stringent warning against "dronkenness and disorderlie tiplinge." There is no reason to suppose the Roundhead, for all his verbiage, had less inclination and capacity for good liquor and living than his Royalist brother: entries of expenditure for "beere" for the soldiery show the contrary, and if Puritan mayors might not be elected, as had hitherto been customary, "on the Lordes' daie," they had to "p'pare a dinner for all the Burgesses and their wives," or "forfeite . . . five pounds of currant money," though only allowed £3 for expenses.

Puritan or no the Lymingtonians managed to rejoice at the Restoration, as the town bills show, "for beere" and "ffurze faggotts" and "bread for the poore." Evidently they had not found the Protector's reign any more to their liking than the King's, and oppression at the hands of the people even worse than the rule of the gentry, and without any of the concomitant mitigations. None the less, Lymington's loyalty was of uncertain quality, and when Monmouth's rebellion shook the West the mayor, as we have seen, raised a body of cavalry in his support. One of the old red-brick houses opposite the church goes by the name of Monmouth's to this day, and, though this is quite unwarrantable, there was a legend that the Duke escaped and hid there after Sedgemoor. Truer, probably,

is the tale of his followers who, talking treason there and surprised by a search party, escaped through the address of their hostess. The men could be disposed of easier than the fumes of pipes and punch bowl, but the good lady, personating a victim of cold and toothache, with her head enveloped in flannel, a steaming kettle and a pipe, delayed the disappointed soldiers sufficiently to cover her friends' escape, and gave plausible excuse enough for the incriminating odours.

A St. Martin's summer of prosperity smiled on the town when in 1756 the Hessian corps had their headquarters there —such headquarters as they must have been! Some of the old buildings may yet be seen in Church Lane; the garden behind that irregular brick wall on the east was once the parade ground, and the house at the end part of the barracks. In St. Thomas' Street a delightful old house, its brick and tile almost buried under Virginia creeper, is still called Quadrille Court, because the officers, they say, met there to play what was then a popular game. In New Lane, halfway along the High Street, were more barracks, but at the best accommodation must have been of the scantiest, considering the numbers quartered here—cavalry, foot, militia and foreign levies.

The sudden discovery by the little world that sea bathing was a desirable pursuit curiously enough brought Lymington into fashion, the fashion that we see now in her streets and houses—curiously, because sea bathing proper is not to be had. There is neither sand nor shingle where the bathers may disport themselves, such sea as there is comes up over the mud marshes of the estuary. But the sea baths were good of their kind and preferable, in the eyes of bygone generations, to the more rough and tumble bathing on the open shore. So Lymington had its day, and was visited by Royalty, and Royal guests feasted at Walhampton and came through an excited crowd and under triumphal arches to be made burgesses of the little town. All of which is well remembered and talked of. A good story is recorded—in the burial register of all places—about the mace bearer on the occasion of a visit from George III. Uncertain as to the correct proceedings for such an important event, but anxious to be in no way behind in all due ceremony and protestation of loyal welcome, the functionary, in full gala glory, fell on his face before the astounded king, exclaiming in scriptural phrase,

doubtless as the most august language his tongue could compass, "I am like a beast before thee!"

The following is a record of the old days of stage coach and turnpike copied from the original manuscript in a carrier's road book:—

"A direction of the Turnpike Road from Lymington Hants to Rugby. Warwickshire.

1 Mile from Lymington is Buckland Gate Toll 1*s.* 6*d.*, 12 miles on is Rumbridge Gate Toll 1*s.* 6*d.*, over Shirley Common from Milbrook, Marlbrook Pond Gate Toll 1*s.* 6*d.*, miles from Rumbridge Gate, miles from Marlbrook Pond Gate is St. Cross Gate Toll 1*s.* 6*d.*, 1 mile from St. Cross to Winchester is the Crown and Cushion Inn, about half a mile from Winchester Gate Toll 1*s.* 6*d.*, 7 Miles from Winton is Sutton Scotney Coach and Horses Inn 5 miles from Sutton Scotney and 12 from Winton is Whitchurch King's Arms Inn. Turnpike going out of Whitchurch Toll 1*s.* 6*d.*, 8 Miles from Whitchurch is Whiteway Carnarvon Arms Inn 2 miles from Whitway is Newtown old Harrow Inn. Swan Inn Gate Toll 1*s.* 6*d.* enters Berkshire 2 miles from Newtown is Newbury distance from Whitchurch 12 Miles."

The rest of the route does not concern us, but the above is sufficient to show that travelling by road a century ago was not only tedious but expensive.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COAST LANDS

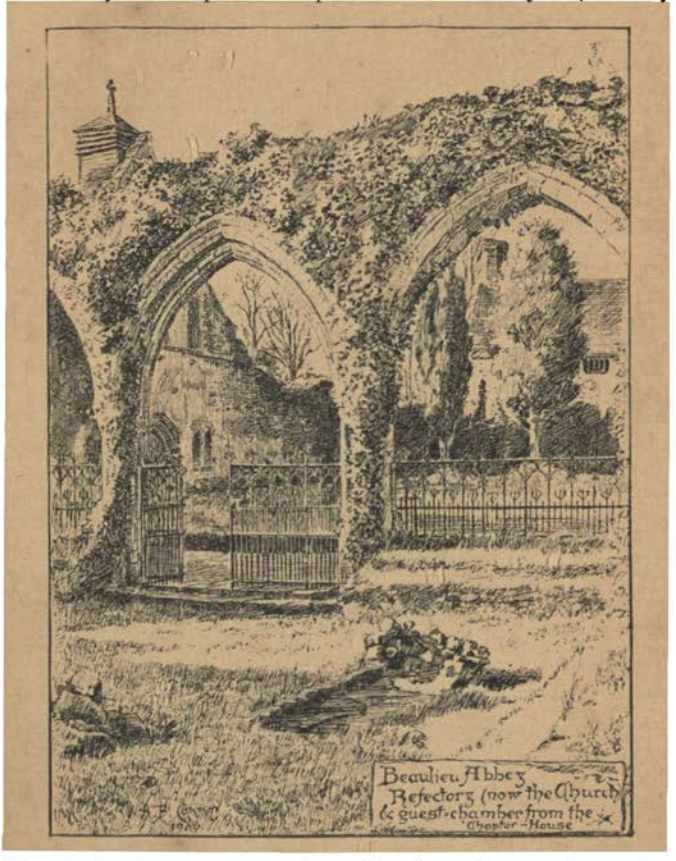
"Certain Times do crystallise themselves in a magnificent manner; and others, perhaps, are like to do it in rather a shabby one!"

CARLYLE—*Past and Present.*

SPEAKING broadly, the coast roads of Hampshire are good, but somewhat disappointing as regards views—there are enough exceptions to prove this generalisation a rule! To reach Beaulieu from Lymington the roads offer choice of open heath or green lanes, that never rise enough to give much view either inland to the Forest, or over the marshes of the foreshore to the sea and the Island. But Beaulieu is beautiful however you come to it; down the by-way that passes its ruined Grange at St. Leonards; across the wild heatherland from Walhampton; or by the roads from Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst—the scenery along both is diversified, and between them lies every variety of Forest country. Bog and moorland, wind-swept plain and wooded dell, orderly lines of dark firs, and enclosures where red oak, maple, deodars and other ornamental trees have been introduced, succeed each other beside the gravelled roadways. Heaths spread on every side, broken by the deep shadows and red-barked trunks of the pines: and hidden in the heart of a winding green valley are the tiled roofs and many-angled gables of Beaulieu village, with shading trees, and masses of creepers waving coral sprays in the summer breeze, or crimsoning under the autumn sun. The grey stone-work of the Palace House shows through the trees by the placid blue surface of the little lake, where swans and many waterfowl find harbourage. The road from Southampton turns at Totton by branching lanes through Eling

and Dibden, and then over a wide and rugged heath. But the choicest way to visit Beaulieu is by boat up its wooded creek.

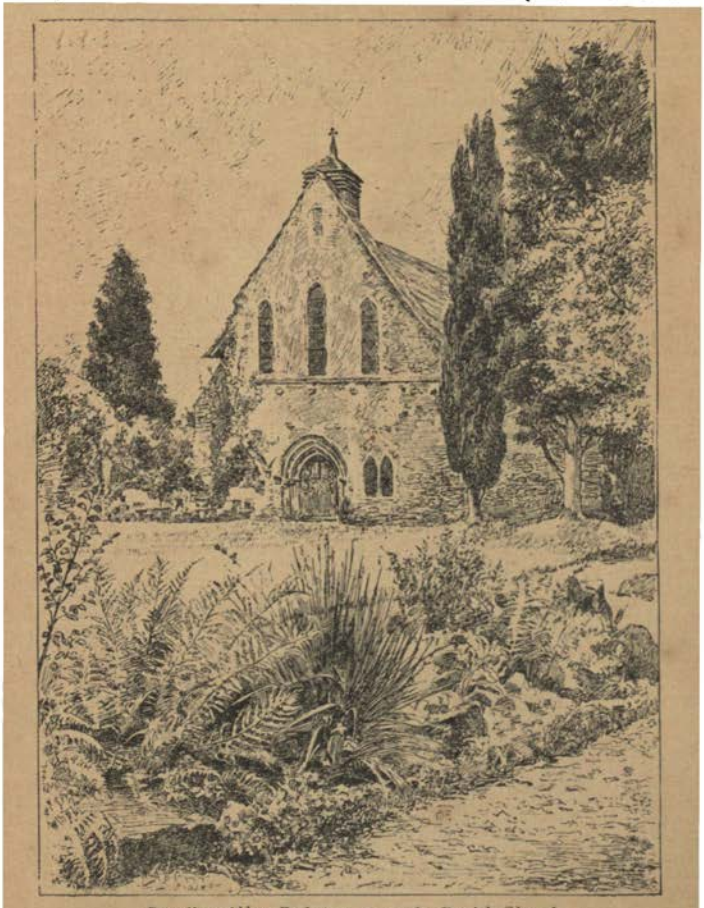
A lovely and a peaceful spot this in which John, of any-



thing but pious memory, in a fit of penitence after a bad nightmare, founded the Cistercian Abbey about 1204.[1]

[1] According to tradition the stones were brought in carts from the Island to Lepe. But the causeway legend dates long ere that—cf. p. 3.

Some of the graceful cloister arches yet stand by mouldering walls, where the wall-flowers riot and the wild pink nods over



Beaulieu Abbey Refectory, now the Parish Church.

the ivy. The foundations of the fine church have been carefully traced and marked out among the grass and flowers. The old refectory, with its Early English lancet windows and

massive buttresses, is now Beaulieu Church. It is a somewhat cheerless building within, due in part to the white paint on the woodwork, but the carved stone pulpit is almost unique and unquestionably beautiful. A narrow stairway leads behind the graceful arcading to this rostrum, the reading desk in old days, whence one of the brothers at meal time "read historical books with a sonorous voice, but homilies and sermons with a more engaging one"—most of the books were commentaries, if Leland reports truly. On the north wall is a curious epitaph dated 1651 :—

> M erciless fate, to our great griefe and wo,
> A pray hath here made of our deere Mall Do ;
> R akte up in dust, and hid in earthe and clay,
> Y et live her soule and virtues now and aye,
> D eathe is a debte all owe, which must be payde,
> O h ! that she knew, and of't was not afraide."

Mary D'O, one of the Lymington Dowes, to whom it was erected, is not to be confused with the Beaulieu witch Mary Dore, whose performances on broomsticks, and quick-changes into a hare, a black cat, or an owl, excited the neighbourhood in the eighteenth century as much as the doings of Kate Hunt did the good folks at Botley. Curiously enough there is confusion also over this witch and a lady with somewhat similar name, Kate Knox, whose tragic fate is perpetuated by the appearance of her ghost on Kit Nox Hill. One or two old people still tell how Kate Hunt was shot, with a half-crown in two pieces, and disappeared as a hare !

When the Abbey was suppressed, trouble arose by reason of sundry criminals and debtors who lived with their wives and families on its grounds, for Beaulieu had important sanctuary rights given by Pope Innocent III. Among the notable people who claimed its refuge was Perkin Warbeck, after his unsuccessful insurrection. The Cornish insurgents had marched through Winchester on their way to Kent. Speed has it that the Mayor of Southampton got £40 "of the king's grace as a reward for taking Perkin Warbeck," but this story has not been verified. Lady Warwick, the king-maker's wife, sought refuge after the Battle of Barnet, and some say Margaret of Anjou came likewise, but this again is unproven. The Abbey formed a part of the spoils that fell to Wriothesley's share at

the Dissolution and passed by marriage to the Montagues. The present Palace includes the old gatehouse and a fourteenth-century groined hall. The second Duke had a great scheme to make a seaport and dépôt for his West Indian trade—he owned the Isle of St. Lucia—in Beaulieu Creek, for in the eighteenth century the shipwrights of Bucklers Hard were celebrated, and turned out many ships for the Navy, built from the sturdy oaks of Beaulieu and the Forest in primitive fashion on the banks of this sheltered stream. Most rarely beautiful it is, as it winds down the mud-banked creek between low hills. The seaport never was more than a vague scheme, and the little place remains to-day as the shipwright Adams knew it, one short, wide street, grass-bordered, between two rows of red gabled houses, running up from the western bank, where a little landing stage juts out by some rotting beams and massive posts. It looks impossible that anything bigger than a cockle shell could ever have been put together here. Yet the *Illustrious*, of 74 guns, and three that shared with her in the glories of Trafalgar, the *Agamemnon*, *Swiftsure*, and *Euryalus*, with many another man-o'-war, were built in this winding creek and towed round to Portsmouth by the sailors in row boats. No easy task, for the fairway twists and turns by spreading beds of golden reeds—there are oysters in some reaches—and a spit of shingle and mud juts out from Needs Oar Point, turning the channel right across to Lepe, where the little Dark Water ends its short but delightful course through the marshy bottoms, and the Roman road that can be traced four miles away, over Beaulieu Heath, ran to the Point. Lepe was of old the port of departure for the Island, and here even as late as Tudor times those who would cross to the Wight generally set sail. The shingle bank is a great gathering place for swans. Strings of the great snowy birds wend their way, 40 or 50 at a time, from Cowes over the narrow channel seas, and down the river from Beaulieu to feed in the shallow waters, and thanks to their sinuous necks successfully compete with the lighter, quicker-moving gulls and curlews.

Exbury House, opposite Bucklers Hard, was the birthplace and home of William Mitford, a pupil of Gilpin's to whom he gave the living of Boldre. Mitford held a commission in the South Hants Militia, as did his friend Edward Gibbon, and it was through the influence of the great historian of the Roman

Empire that Colonel Mitford was led to write, beside sundry military treatises, his *History of Greece* that --

> "in the nineteenth century
> Gives, with Greek truth, the good old Greek the lie"

according to Byron ; but despite adverse criticism and quaint conceits of style long held its own.

Remote from rail and highways this strip of country that lies between Beaulieu Creek and Southampton Water is quiet and unfrequented, woods and heaths alternate with cultivated land, and marshes border the low coast line and give shelter to many an interesting migrant among our bird visitors. The wild sea-kale, that long ago was gathered by the fisher folk and sold in Southampton markets, grows near Calshot Castle. Once these massive walls were an important fort, built by Henry VIII of materials from the dismantled abbeys of Netley and Beaulieu, so runs the tradition, and a "place of great strength" in Civil War days. The garrison in Tudor times consisted of a captain, a subaltern, four soldiers, eight gunners and a porter, and their pay was a shilling for the captain, eightpence for the lieutenant and the porter, and sixpence for the men, per diem.

Fawley, which lies just off the marshes on the western shore of Southampton Water, has some fine Norman work in its church, with many memorials of the Drummonds of Cadlands. It is the only church of much interest hereabouts except Eling, the Edlinges of Domesday Book—the arch in its north aisle stood there before the great record was compiled, another witness that the ruthless King was not quite so destructive as the monkish chroniclers would have had it believed. The Norman tower was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, but most of Eling Church is of the Decorated period. The parish registers are some of the very earliest in the county. The churchyard, though not among the best kept, cannot help being beautiful, for between its fine elms are glimpses over the wide spaces where the twin rivers Test and Itchen meet the sea. There are some characteristic tombstones of eighteenth-century date, grey and lichen splotched, embellished with Cupids, ships, medallions, grapes, hour-glasses, weeping willows, skulls, crossbones and so forth, as the taste of that day deemed appropriate and beautiful. One to "William son of Henry Mansbridge of Cadnam," aroused my sympathies by the plea :—

" Stop reader pray and read my fate
What caused my life to terminate
For thievs by night when in my bed
Broke in my hous and shot me dead."

for "thievs" had "broke in my hous" but a week before, when the writing of this book had taken me to Hampshire!

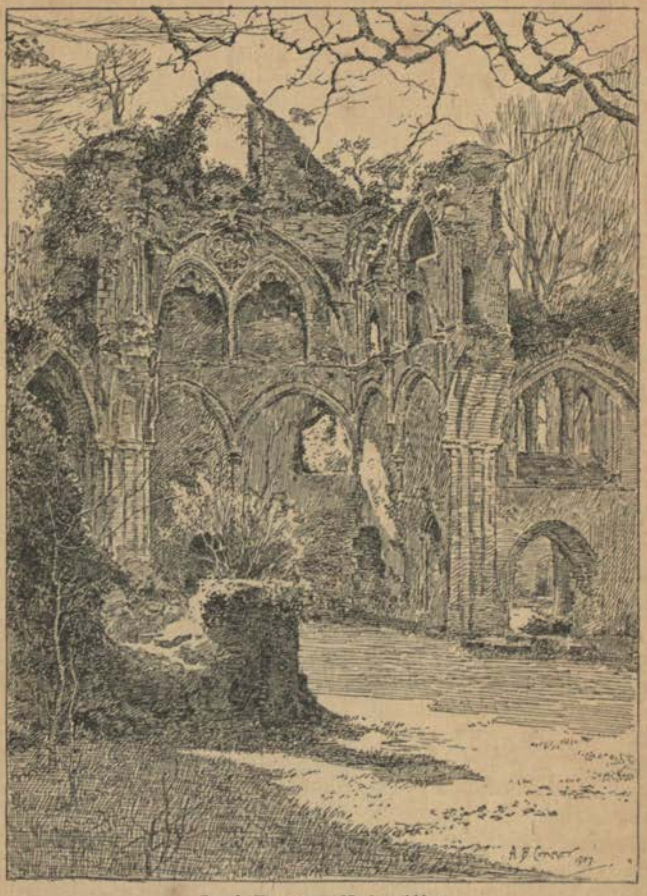
After roaming through this flat but pleasant country, by pretty cottages and winding lanes, it is worth while to turn off through Dibden to see the view over Southampton Water from the high land above Hythe. Below the gorse and bracken-clad waste green flats slope to the changeful blue waters, while across the narrow sea-arm the walls of Netley show among the trees. Seen from a distance the Hospital with its long frontage set in the woods by the sheltered water is picturesque enough, but closer inspection leads one to agree with Wise that it "loads the shore with its costly ugliness,"[1] and to respect the critics rather than the advocates of the scheme when, as a result of the Crimean War, it was decided to build a great Military Hospital on the low shore of Southampton Water. Netley had not a good reputation as a camping ground at any rate, for when the troops under Lord Moira were encamped there, during the Napoleonic War, fever was very rife among them. As a remedy the doctors advised that porter should be served to the men, but Government, penny wise and pound foolish as usual, refused to sanction the increased expenditure. For once, however, the soldiers did not suffer, for Moira generously provided the 7,000 bottles required per day. He got his return during the subsequent campaign in Flanders. "Boys! didn't the Lord give us bottled porter when we were sick at Netley, and hasn't he the right to take it out of us now in sweat?" cried an Irishman during an arduous march when the tired troops had all but succumbed. And Paddy's appeal saved the situation.

A mile away to the north-west is Netley Castle, built in the last century upon the remains of the old fort Henry VIII made, what time he constructed Calshot and furthered other fortifications along this coast. The remains of the Abbey are hidden in the trees behind.

. . . .

[1] Wise. *The New Forest, its History and Scenery*, p. 50.

The ruins of the Cistercian house that Henry III founded in 1239, at Netley, or Letley, are indisputably the most beautiful



South Transept, Netley Abbey.

in the county, as many a poet's pen and artist's pencil doth affirm! They are not greatly changed from what they were when Walpole wrote his oft-quoted description to Bentley of this home

of "the purple abbots." Above the ivy-grown walls and interloping trees stand "fragments of beautiful fretted roof pendant in the air," especially the arch above the south transept, which looks so frail that after every storm one wonders, is it still there? But the foliage must be thicker than in Walpole's day, for the views over the Solent are shut out from the grounds now, and a road runs between them and the Castle, while rows of red villas have invaded the rural solitudes, and turned into suburbs of Southampton the wild and lonely places where, as their rule required, the Cistercian brothers made their home. The order, according to one old chronicler, was "both believed and asserted to be the surest road to heaven," and their rules were strict. This colony was an offshoot from Beaulieu. The lands were bought by Peter Des Roches to endow an Abbey, and Henry III continued the work after the death of his old tutor, and granted free warren on lands in Netley and elsewhere, a market at Hound, St. Margaret's fair for two days at Wellow, land in the Forest, and wine from Southampton.

Very beautiful must the great church have been in the days of its splendour. Built at the period when the severe lines of the Early English style were merging into the elaborate designs of the Decorated period, the high narrow arches keep their dignity, but the sternness is modified by the filigree of stonework, and now with trailing ivy that mantles the grey ruin. Very beautiful it remains, a shady, peaceful spot at high noon when all the roof is the blue sky, and instead of painted glass green ivy shoots push through the crevices, hang in graceful festoons in the gaping window arches, and twine over the fretwork of pillar and arch that remain. Very beautiful, but with the sadness that pertains to all ruins, so more attuned to evening, when shadows lengthen on the grass, and sunset lights blaze between the trees and then pale, till the cold moon rises, and its white light filters through the pools of inky shadow, and the thread of arch in mid-air hangs like a fairy bridge, too intangible to be of mortal workmanship. In the gloom and silence the tale of the Earl whose ghost locked up trespassers, the legend of the mysterious sword, seem more credible than the story of treasure trove, though the hole where the dreamed-of treasure was found be shown as proof of that story.

When the Commissioners visited Netley, in 1536, they reported it was—

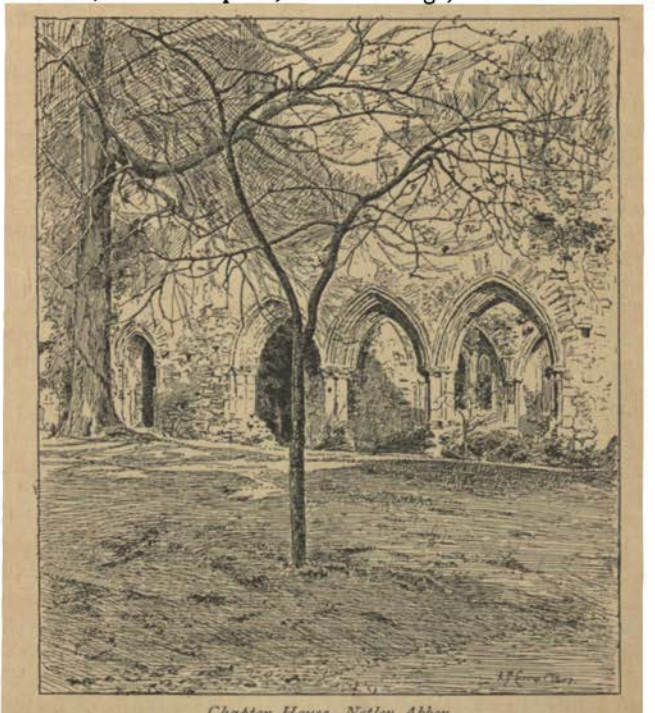
"A bredde house of Monkes of thordre of Cisteaux, beinge of large buyldinge and situate upon the Ryvage of the sees. To the Kinge's subjects and strangers travelinge the same sees great Relief and Comforte,"

this probably meaning that a lamp was kept alight to guide mariners after nightfall. Despite the good report the Abbey was sequestered, and along with part of its lands fell to William Powlett. The properties passed to the Seymours, and when Lord Hertford owned it he entertained the "King of the English" here, as well as at Elvetham, his other Hampshire home. A record of this visit was cut on the base of one of the pillars—*Elizabetha Rex Angliæ*, and so forth. The old buildings saw many changes in their transformation from monastery to private house. The nave became a tennis court; horses were stabled in the refectory; and my lord's dinner was cooked in the chapter house. In the wild wave of destruction the civil strife of the next century let loose on the land "some rude Dismantler of this Abbey"[1] fell himself a victim to his depredations. The stones did better than "cry out," they crashed down on the Puritan zealot and ended his career and destructions very promptly. A like fate awaited a purchaser named Taylor, a Southampton builder, when he bought the Abbey Church from Sir Berkeley Lucy some fifty years later, with intent to use the materials for building purposes. The story is that Taylor had a dream which greatly concerned him, for in the vision a stone fell and killed him when working in his recent purchase. He took counsel with divers people, Deacon Isaac Watts for one, but, despite their advice, and his dream, proceeded with his sacrilegious project, till, as the dream foretold, a stone did fall and cracked his skull, and an unskilful surgeon completed the business. Thereafter the church was left to the destroying hands of time and neglect, not without assistance from nineteenth-century excursionists. Fifty years ago the ruins were in a sadly disgraceful state, but much has been amended, though pleasure seekers and those who cater for them have yet to discover that there might be a more fitting place for a display of fireworks than by the old walls that once bore the motto Wordsworth translated:—

[1] Keate, *Netley Abbey: an Elegy.*

> "Here Man more purely lives, less oft doth fall,
> More promptly rises, walks with stricter heed,
> More safely rests, dies happier, is freed
> Earlier from cleansing fires, and gains withal
> A brighter crown."

Hound, where the monks had their weekly market, is a small and, for these parts, remote village, with a small Early



Chapter House, Netley Abbey.

English church, on the winding road that leads to Hamble le Rice, the quaintest of tiny seaports. A pretty little place it is, nestling under the low wooded hill on the west bank of the Hamble Creek, with narrow twisty streets, old houses, and primitive ferry to Warsash, across the wide estuary, where many a yacht is laid up for the winter months. Hamble

lobsters, Hamble crabs, Hamble oysters, and line fishing from row boats, keep up its reputation as a good fishing town, even as in Leland's day. Among the ruins of old Silchester the oyster shells in the fishmongers' shops testify that the exceeding goodness of Hamble's chief output was fully appreciated by the sybarites of Calleva ; and in later days the Priors of Hamble paid their annual tribute to St. Swithun's in 20,000 oysters. All that remains of the Benedictine Priory to-day is some Norman work in the church, and a doorway in the south wall that led to the Priory and now opens into a new south aisle.

William Giffard, Bishop of Winchester at the commencement of the twelfth century, founded the Priory as a cell of the Abbey at Trion, Chartres. It was endowed by the pious relict of Roger Alis, and Ascelina Guimond, also widowed, while the king, Henry I, provided such footgear as fifteen marks per annum would purchase, and gave freedom of toll, passage and pontage in his realms of England and Normandy. Two centuries later the Prior quarrelled with the Hamble folk over the repairs of the bell tower, but a few years after the French war engrossed men's minds. Hamble was one of the places that suffered in the French raid of 1377, and the Priory did not escape. In fact the Prior must have been a sad man those days for, with other alien houses, his income was encroached on. Finally, William of Wykeham bought it from the French Abbey and made it a part of the endowment of his Winchester College. No bad exchange that for the parishioners, for the College restored both church and manor. The small bell bears the arrogant inscription :—

" Lettel and small tho' I ham but I will be hard above them all."

About two miles to the north as the crow flies, but more by river and double the distance by road, is Burseldon, where the highroad from Southampton to Farnham passes over a fine toll-bridge. From Burseldon, it is said, St. Boniface went to the Holy Land. It would seem the Cook of those days found it a convenient port from which to dispatch his tourists, or pilgrims as they then were. Less peaceable voyagers also made use of this sheltered creek in the olden times, for in 1875 a large Danish war-boat was found in the mud of the Hamble —it is rumoured the figurehead was last seen in a cottage at Burseldon. Naval shipwrights from Alfred's day to Nelson's

had their yards along these flat shores as well as at Bucklers Hard, and men-of-war were built in spaces deemed insufficient for the construction of a yacht to-day.

The land that lies between Burseldon and Portsmouth Harbour is a land of gravelly roads that wind interminably by low-hedged fields; the levels broken here and there by elm trees, monotonous after the oaks, beeches, and pines of the Forest. Everywhere new watering places spring up, and an epidemic of red villas spreads by the flat coast and the gorse-covered commons. There are but two churches of any particular age or interest, Rowner and Alverstoke, both dating from Norman times. The manor of Rowner was given by Edward I to Sir William le Brun. The Norman doorway to the vestry was originally in the south porch. The walls were rebuilt in 1873, but the Early English piers and arches remain, though most of the old mural paintings have perished. The present chancel was the Brune chapel. Sir John Brune left £6 to repair it, and £5 to buy "a decente coppe of black velvet or sad tawny velvet," with £10 for his tomb. There are other interesting memorials in the church and its well-kept graveyard, one to Sir Frederick Thesiger, Nelson's friend. Another recalls a very different character, Paul Jones the pirate no less, for the lady buried beneath was the widow of "Captain George Burdon of the Royal Navy who was kill'd in an engagement with *Paul Jones* off Belfast in 1778," her epitaph declares. Many of the old stones have been cleaned and the lettering redone, so one can read of "Elizabeth porter and 4 of her children"—

> "wepnot Dear Frinds For we no More
> For we are gon aloft before Resting in hopes yt
> Wee are Blest & are in ioyw ith ouer Sauer Christ."

This is dated 1728, an earlier one to William Bassett runs:—

> "All you that comes my grave to view
> think one ye glaſs that runs for you
> fly fr one sin live godly Still
> and be prepared comwhen it will."

Rowner was a very favourite place for local weddings, though its quiet solitude is rather suggestive of runaway matches; but eloping couples went off to Guernsey, the

Gretna Green of the south. John King, the old Parish Clerk, was quite a celebrity in his day. Notable were his struggles with the church stove, a chronic interruption during the winter. "Drat him! he's out again," followed by a violent banging and thrusting with the poker, would arrest the Sunday service, till a triumphant "No! he ain't, he'll do now," permitted the Rector and congregation to resume their devotions!

In Alverstoke Church—no traces remain now of Norman work in its reconstructed fabric—is a memorial tablet to those of Her Majesty's 44th Foot who perished in the Afghan Campaign of 1841–2, already alluded to, and the tattered colour that hangs above had an adventurous history. After Keane's departure from Kabul there followed the Afghan revolt, and the terrible retreat of the British Army down the Passes, ending, a week later, in the final slaughter at Gandamak. Sorry among all the sad reading the tale of those disastrous months supplies, is the record of that regiment, paid for by the loss of all but two officers and thirty-eight rank and file. Captain Souter wrapped the regimental colour round his body and managed to save it. His own escape was of the narrowest, as a fellow prisoner and survivor of the tragedy noted :—

"He reached Gandamak with the remnant of his corps, at which place while the massacre was going on he was seized and dragged off the scene of murder by one of the Afghans less bloodthirsty than the rest, and hurried away to a small village in the Mountains. Here he remained for about a fortnight, and was well treated, until it came to the Sirdar's knowledge. Then he was immediately demanded of and given up, much against the wish of his captors who had hoped to ransom him for a sum of money. The colour of his Regiment he has been lucky enough to bring in safety to Badiabad." [1]

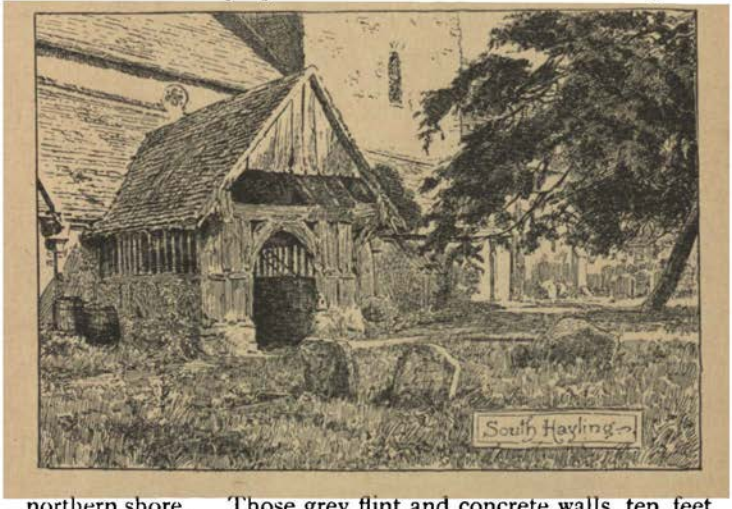
. . . . . .

Beyond the tongue of low-lying land that runs out to Gillicker Point the scene changes with all the magic of contrast so notable in this county. The Portsdown hills, brown, yellow, and grey, scarred here and there with chalk-pits and blocks of sternly-ugly barracks, rise above the elms in the market-gardens, with gay strips of scarlet-runners among the blue and green of beans, by fields of potatoes starred with the violet and white of their beautiful blossoms; and beyond lie the oozy marshes and shingle banks of the coast. Waves and rivers silted up the detritus

[1] MS. Journal of Colonel Hugh Johnson.

that went to their making, and cut out the creeks and wide lagoons that give Hampshire the fine harbours of Portsmouth and Langstone—famous for its cockles!—with a share in her neighbour's waters of Chichester Harbour, for the boundary runs between Thorney and Hayling Islands, and up through the quaint old village of Emsworth.

But of all these creeks and marshlands, that of most interest and unique charm is Portsmouth Harbour itself, with the quaint villages of Wymering and Porchester, and the grand old Castle where the waters lap up over the mud and weeds that fringe its

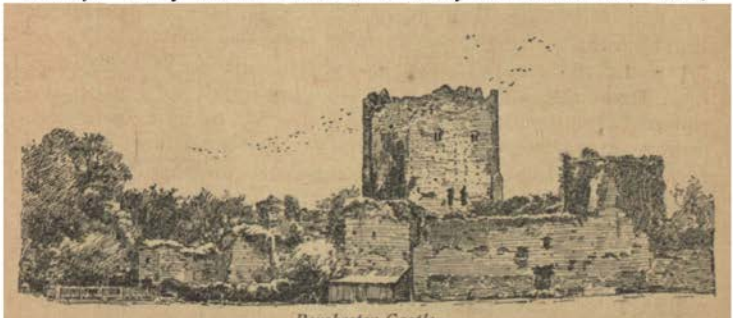


northern shore. Those grey flint and concrete walls, ten feet thick, with their bonding courses of limestone slabs, similar to the ruined wall at Silchester, the semicircular bastions—some have perished, removed by the Norman builders when they placed the great keep in the north-west corner, or washed down by storm and sea—have looked out over the ocean pathway for some sixteen centuries, since the Roman builders fortified the site. Legend has it Caerperis Gurgant, another story says Perrex (do any but experts know aught of either?), had here built a British town, where Vespasian landed to commence his British wars, and later on sailed, another tradition says, to besiege Jerusalem. Legends there be in plenty of this fourth-

century fort, its origin, and the reason of its name—the derivation from *Portus Magnus* is a seventeenth-century invention, nor is there a jot of evidence in favour of the tale that St. Paul came hither on a mission to Britain and landed at Paulsgrove. History is deficient till later times. It is disputed if the fortress was one of the nine Roman forts that protected the Saxon Shore, but be that as it may, Cerdic and Cynric attacked it in 501, though the question of its capture is uncertain. Port, or Portha, if the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle may be trusted, there is doubt of it in this instance, had here his headquarters, hence another derivation of the name. It was of no particular importance when the Domesday Survey was made, but after Robert of Normandy had effected a landing here, in 1101, its value was again recognised. To Henry I, therefore, the building of the early Norman portions, part of the great tower and inner bailey, as well as the foundation of the Priory, has been assigned. The Castle continued to be of importance and favour in Royal eyes for many generations, and its story is a long list of regal visits, restorations, and rebuildings. But the garrison never seems to have been a large one, even in the days of the French wars. When Portsmouth developed the old Castle declined. As a defence it was too far from the seaboard, and Southsea Castle eventually superseded it; as a refuge it was happily not required; so with Tudor times the Royal palace and Governor's house—for the Governor of Portsmouth was Constable of the Castle—became "for the most parte very ruynous," the King's surveyor reported, "by reason the leade hath been cutt and imbezzled." It was used later for naval stores, and finally turned into a prison. In old days only prisoners of note and circumstance were kept here, such as the Earl of Leicester in 1173/ the Countess of Brittany a year later, and sundry supporters of the Bruce in the fourteenth century; but during the Dutch War in the seventeenth century, and again during the Napoleonic campaigns, prisoners of war were bestowed within the stout old walls. Upwards of 8,000 are said to have been packed into the limited space, or more than 800 to an acre! They were first kept in improvised shelters and in the keep, the six floors that exist to-day being then laid in place of the ruinous older ones. As the number increased fifteen two-storied buildings were erected as further accommoda-

tion, and many a page might be filled with the stories of their life; their efforts to escape, to make a trifle of money, to amuse themselves; their sicknesses and sufferings. But, after all, John Bull is a soft-hearted old gentleman, and their hard fate compares favourably, on the whole, with the lot meted out to our poor fellows in continental prisons.

Such, in brief, is the story of the fine old Castle, and if it played no prominent part, and boasts no dramatic siege, yet by reason of its venerable age it deserves better fate than is now its portion. Wallflower, valerian, and snap-dragon find holding in the crevices of the walls; ivy and traveller's joy fling their green wreaths over this monument of human futility. They do their best to beautify and adorn the ruins,



Porchester Castle.

but nettles fringe the walls and push up round the rubbish heaps and refuse in corners. Between the entrance lodge and the inner bailey is a tea-garden, and swings and cocoanut-shies stand on the rough grass between the ruined buildings and the church.[1] The place, they told me, was rented by the owner, a wealthy man, for £100 a year to a speculating caterer! The lines Barham wrote on Netley came to mind at the sight—not to mention sound!—of the cheap pleasure-ground within those old walls. Like genial "Ingoldsby" the writer:—

[1] Porchester, like Christchurch, has a legend of an unearthly Supernumerary, though it differs considerably and came about by an eighteenth-century owner permitting theatricals to be held in what was once the chapel. An uninvited actor, with due accompaniment of smell and blue light, speedily cleared the room, and then with an "*Exeunt omnes*" locked the door. The moral appears to have been in part forgotten.

"Was exceedingly angry, and very much scandalized,
Finding these beautiful ruins so Vandalized,
And thus of their owner to speak began,

. . . . . .

'NO DOUBT HE'S A VERY RESPECTABLE MAN,
But—*I can't say much for his taste.*'"

The church, though "repaired and beautified 1710, as duly notified, "by the bounty of Queen Anne," is practically as the Norman masons left it, with the exception of the south transept, which was pulled down—the materials were used to build the wall round the churchyard—and the Perpendicular insertions at the east end. The Norman west front is unaltered, except by the lichens which have diapered the stonework with grey and yellow patches, and within the simplicity and the fine proportions that add so much to the impressiveness of Norman buildings are unimpaired. The black marble Norman font is to be ranked with the four famous square ones in the county, though this is cylindrical, and all of the original remaining is the top, with its interlaced arcading below elaborate scrollwork.

The church stands in the south-east angle of the old Roman walls, and not far from the water gate—Porchester was a naval station under Carausius—opening on the great pathway of the sea beyond. Is this not Hampshire's greatest highway after all? And the story of her winding sea lane is enthralling as that of any of her thoroughfares. It, too, has unexpected wild nooks, and secluded corners that will compete with the loneliest byway. Nothing can be more dreary than sea marshes when the dank Channel mists, grey, cheerless, treacherous as the ooze below, wrap the land, and the syren's "frightened whine" booms through the drifting fog-wreaths, now rising to a shrilly excited screech, now dropping to a monotonous wailing no banshee ever bettered. But another day, when the sea is a blue mirror silvered by the sun, and the sea lavender spreads a cloud of violet by the golden reed beds, and all the wild life of the coast lands goes joyously about its business of living, the desolation turns to a delightful playground. There is something unforgettable about the taste of the salted breeze, the fresh, pungent scent of tar—and the occasionally accompanying by no means fresh odours of hot oil and sun-festered weed!—that haunts the memory long after the hustle of life has dragged one from the haunts of the curlew and oxey

bird back to dusty streets and noisy thoroughfares. And there are more than scents and scenes to recall. Think what generations of ships have threaded the narrow straits since the first primitive vessels found their way along the shelving shore: Phœnician and Roman traders; Alfred's ships, England's embyro navy; the long, half-decked galleys, over which floated the raven flag of the war god, bringing invaders from the adventurous North; British fleets that have sailed to carry the flag to the uttermost ends of the old world and find a pathway to the new, to bring riches from the tropics and trophies from the polar seas, to plant fresh nations in other hemispheres and build up a sea-knit empire! This is no fancy picture, but the baldest statement of facts; and facts that need no adventitious setting. What fiction can compete with these histories? No invention is needed to add force to the story of the sailing of the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell*, for instance. There is a picture of this in the Southampton Audit Hall, for the good ships that bore the founders of a mighty nation sailed from that Hampshire port. Then there are battle histories. The vast ocean spaces hold their toll of innumerable dead, but it is the narrow seas that have run reddest with blood. For centuries after the days when the Warden of the Shore gathered his forces to repulse the pirate hordes, fighting, raid, and foray were the lot of the coastlands, even when the seas were swept clear of enemies' fleets, the surging tides from the maëlstrom of war lapped hitherwards. There were days of trouble when the pressgangs swept the ports, as well as days of triumph when fleets came home with prizes and much booty. Never a dull page is there in the whole great volume, though many a sad one: wreck and disaster as well as reviews and regattas; privateers and pirates committing robbery on the high seas almost under the guns of the coast fortifications; and smugglers adventuring life and limb to run their cargoes of contraband. Some of the lonely creeks along this coast were famous smugglers' runs; Becton Bunney and many another have yarns of daring deeds, aye, and bloody ones too, before free trade was supposed to have dealt a deathblow to that time-honoured profession. The smugglers' runs spread like a network over the country; I know of a hiding hole in a farmhouse north of Alton, and have followed up more than one of the smugglers' paths in the north-west. If there are

none of the wilder doings in these humdrum days, there are yarns still which more or less make up in humour what they lack in excitement. You may see the pond in the excise-man's garden at Lymington where many a barrel of brandy was hidden. More than one good tale is told of the yacht —— whose owner had done so much successful smuggling that the authorities' suspicions were very considerably aroused, in fact it seemed impossible that he could land any contraband again. But Jack, his factotum, thought otherwise. "You go ashore, sir, and leave it to me," was his comment. Next morning the coastguards met Jack wheeling a barrel up from the beach and stopped him promptly for searching inquiries. Jack claimed sympathy, not investigation. "My master 'e's a fool, 'e is," quoth he, "'is latest idee is 'e 'll 'ave a barth of salt water, and I'm blessed if I ain't got to wheel up this old barrow full of salt sea waves for 'im afore breakfast every mornin'." "He be a fool," said the coastguards. Thereafter Jack daily wheeled his barrel full of contraband unquestioned by the signal station.

Those who remember *Westward Ho!* will recall the aged sailor Martin Cockrem's account of the loss of the *Mary Rose*. In the old picture of Henry VIII watching the French under D'Annebaut coming round the Island to engage Lord Lisle and the English ships, the dead bodies and rigging, shown near the mastheads of a vessel above the water, represent this disaster. In 1701 the *Edgar* blew up, and two years later the *Newcastle* sank during an awful storm in November. 1795 saw the burning of the *Boyne*, but the best-known tragedy at Spithead is that commemorated in Cowper's lines—

> "It was not in the battle,
> No tempest gave the shock;
> She sprang no fatal leak,
> She ran upon no rock.
>
> His sword was in its sheath,
> His fingers held the pen,
> When Kempenfelt went down,
> With twice four hundred men."

The *Royal George* was being careened, the guns shifted, and then—"*Toll for the brave.*"

But of all scenes that have had these seas for setting, at once the saddest, the simplest, and most majestic took place on that

January day in 1901, when, while a pageant of glory flooded the sky from the setting sun, the nation waited,—waited in that wonderful silence that held the stricken land, the coming of the yacht that bore for its last journey what was mortal of a great, beloved Queen, a passing that may take rank with Arthur's, when another Tennyson shall find voice for a world-wide empire's sorrow.

CHAPTER XX

PORTSMOUTH

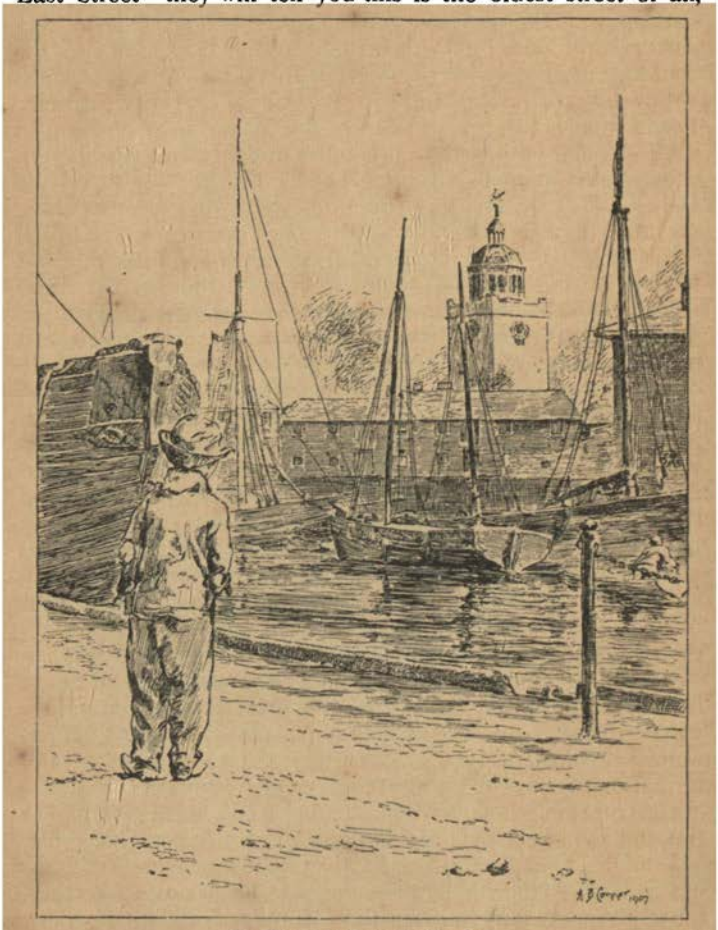
ACRES of oozy mud, miles of narrow, cobbled streets between endless rows of monotonous, small houses, the clang and whirring scrape of electric trams "cabin'd, cribb'd, confined" in the least possible road-space, with carts and lorries, pedestrians, coster-barrows, perambulators; bicycles with shrill and futile jangle of bells, motors with equally futile and more impatient hooting; smells compounded of tar, red-herring and petrol; and at night darkness made solid by sizzling electric lights, at more economic than useful distances, flaring gas-jets over the miscellaneous stores in shop windows, and the blinding flash of lamps on passing cycles and motors that dim to absurdity the feeble glimmer deemed enough for cumbersome, slow-moving traffic! All this is Portsmouth, and were there no more—no Portsmouth of history, no gallant memories that to recall in detail would fill as many volumes as we may pages—its not particularly pleasant highways, and many distinctly unpleasant byways, might be left, and we would hurry over the bleak range of barren hills that cut off the fertile valleys and woodlands to the north. But, though Portsmouth has yet to find an adequate historian, her history is long and eventful, and her memories include many a page the absence of which would be sorry loss to our national records.

In the majority of places history centres round some particular building—the castle, the manor hall, the church—but in Portsmouth this is not so. Porchester Castle, grand old ruin, stands away, its history in a measure apart from its daughter town, and Portsmouth herself called Southsea Castle, her churches, her hospice, the fortresses and the docks into being

rather than grew up around them; even the docks—and they existed when King John shipped his "hunting dogs" to Normandy. The district ranges into historical ken when Ethelred, son of Edgar, gave Fratton, or Frederington as it then was, to Winchester's New Minster. In the eleventh century all the manors were agricultural, and a saltern already existed at Copnor. From thenceforward Portsmouth comes fairly into notice: it shared with Southampton the favour of the Norman kings as a place of departure for their lands in France, and continued to increase in importance as a shipbuilding centre. And with the docks we come, after all, on the nucleus, the cause that gathered the first settlers on these alluvial levels—no work of man but the outcome of the ages, fashioned by the waters that deposited the miles of ooze and cut deep channels and basins through the wide marshes. Since the waters were "gathered together and the dry land appeared," or ever early man first pushed out in his primitive vessels, Portsmouth has offered as fine a shelter as could be desired to those who would adventure forth on the deep. The hills to the north that hindered her commercial progress made her harbour the fitter for defensive purposes, and so it is we have in the narrow seas of Solent and Spithead not only Southampton—in many ways an unrivalled commercial port—but Portsmouth, the foremost naval station.

Little of old Portsmouth is left, and, would you find it, you must penetrate behind the modern frontage into some of the back streets—no longer its highways—running mostly at right angles to the present main roads; though here and there you will find an old house left behind in a forgotten niche where it has escaped the Juggernaut march of Progress. The oldest corner is at the back of Broad Street and the Hard. There are houses with sixteenth and seventeenth-century dates on their beams, in narrow, twisting lanes that look neglected, ill-paved, ill-lighted, with the air of an aged man who has done his duty by his country and is left in his dotage to exist as best he may. This was the Portsmouth Nelson knew. Go to it, as he did many a time, through the old Sally Port, or by St. Thomas's Street. Nelson knew High Street also, if not as it looks to-day, but this melancholy collection of houses, mostly red brick and red tile, with here and there a shingled front, or, more rarely, half-timbered, has had no renovations and improvements to bring

it in line with the times. Opposite the "Shovellers' Arms" in East Street—they will tell you this is the oldest street of all,



St. Thomas's from the Camber.

and one of the oldest inhabitants keeps the aforesaid inn, "three and twenty years only," has he been there, but his predecessor and his mother, "old Granny Meads," were there

for ninety years, that is back to the days of Nelson !—opposite, then, is a ramshackle, roofless ruin, part brick, part timbered ; the eastern end is of later addition than the west, with queer corners and odd, broken-paned, blackened windows in the angles. This, according to East Street tradition, once was "the admiral's house," but how or when the gossips of Spice Island tell not. Spice Island—the name is a volume in itself ! What visions does it conjure up of gallant vessels with snowy sails outspread, bearing homewards the wealth of the Indies ! The reality is not so suggestive. Once an opening ran from the top of the dock—the Inner Camber—where Broad Street now passes, and the name, in truth, declares the past history of this plot of quaint corners, weather-beaten tiles, shingled houses with the planks ripping off, and doors fitted with grooves into which boards can be hastily slipped and banked with clay to keep the water out when a south-easterly or westerly gale, or a high tide, floods all the streets in this low-lying quarter. This quay—the commercial harbour of Portsmouth—runs round from between the Point and the New Gun-wharf, some 700 feet in length only, for Portsmouth is naval first and everything else too far after to be worth consideration ! Commerce goes to Southampton, and such as exists here is only in relation to the great naval and military station. There is nothing of prosperity by the dockside, littered with rubbish, ill-kept, unclean, evil-looking and very evil-smelling. Yonder block of red brick, at the corner facing the dock, once held all the food stores for the Navy ! That was in the old days, when "everything was docked"—but the ships which should have been !—before the Crimean War and its disclosures. Have we ever had a big war without that sad appendage ? Afterwards, the old Cavalry Barracks at Gosport were taken over and turned into the present Victualling Yard.

Gosport, for all its busy modernity, has a quaint corner or two and some remains of the fortifications Charles II erected. The origin of the name is said to be that when Stephen of Blois was shipwrecked in a storm he landed here, and his brother, the Bishop of Winchester, called it thenceforth God's Port. Holy Trinity Church, to the south of the Hard, was built at the close of the seventeenth century, and therefore is but few years older than its organ, one of Jordan's, bought for 112 guineas from the chapel at Canons, where it was used by

Handel when organist to the Duke of Chandos.[1] The screen was put up as a memorial to Sir Andrew Clark, once a surgeon at Haslar, the great Naval Hospital which in 1746 replaced the old Fortune Hospital where naval invalids were treated by contract. Very different is the Victualling Yard bakery from the one in King Street, when George III, according to O'Keefe, set the fashion of eating biscuits in the streets by munching a specimen after visiting the Naval Bakehouse. Ninety years ago it was considered wonderful when the six ovens turned out a ton of biscuits in a day; nowadays the machinery turns out ten times that quantity in an hour!

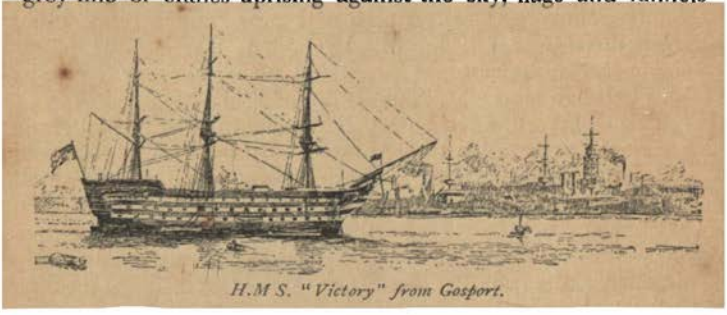
The Gosport side of the harbour must not be left without a word about a recent addition to the Naval Intelligence Department—the feathered messengers in the Pigeon Loft. During the Franco-German War something like 1,150,000 messages were carried into Paris by pigeons, but though other Governments profited by the lesson thus demonstrated, it was not till after the Fashoda scare that any attempt was made to provide Great Britain with an official service of trained carriers. If Marconi's invention detracts from its usefulness the bird messenger may yet find a place in schemes of war. The great drawback to the employment of birds used to be that they would only fly to the loft from which they were trained, but it has been proved that the limitation was due to the training and not to columbine intelligence, for these naval pigeons are trained to fly to whichever loft is nearest their point of despatch. But fascinating as are all matters pertaining to the flight of birds, there is too much to be seen and noted to spare more space for the Pigeon Loft. Consider how much of naval history has had Portsmouth for setting, not to mention the fleets that have anchored in her harbour and off Spithead, the comings and goings of great admirals, victors welcomed home, heroes who passed out to return no more to the mother-

[1] There has been much controversy over Handel's connection with this organ, as it has been claimed that he was organist of Edgware Church, and the organ there bears a notice that he "composed Esther on it"! Handel was never organist of Edgware, but of the Duke's private chapel, afterwards pulled down. Holy Trinity vestry book has the entry of purchase with the auctioneer's name, and the subscription list is in the vicar's possession. The organ was restored some years ago, the action having become worn out, retaining all that was valuable of Jordan's work, the pipes and oak carving. The ducal monogram is still on the diapason pipes.

land they fought for: sad scenes, too, disaster, shipwreck, mutiny, and such tragedy as the trial on board the *St. George* of Admiral Byng for the loss of Minorca, and his execution on the *Monarque's* quarter-deck. To attempt description would be matter for several chapters; there is infinity of detail everywhere, the grand harbour, the dockyards, the piers, batteries, barracks, the Gunwharf with its awesome collection of engines of death. Look round at the lines of fortifications that lie low along the flat coast lands; the massive masonry above the shifting waters with the latest attempts of man to ape Nature at protective colouring—it looks as though sundry huge and ugly patchwork quilts had been hung out to dry on prominent points of the defences, which thereby offer less definite mark to a distant enemy—moats, bastions, embankments, entrenchment, fosse, scarp, rampart and revetment, fearful names, in that they whisper of war, but to the lay ear for the most part words without meaning, for which *laus Deo*, with reservations! For this blessing disguises a curse, and seeds of future evil lie in the seeming promise. So long have they been words only to the British public that their need and use become words also. And the millennium is not yet. Not that a triple multiplication of these and such like defences would suffice to render our islands impregnable. The secret of Great Britain's defence lies deeper than the deepest ditch. The Navy is her first line of defence. May it be as ready when the hour comes as—it is supposed to be! But a first line implies a second, and even a third, and in the hour of supreme struggle no skill of sapper, no intricate death-dealing device of the most scientific artillerist suffices if the heart of the nation he not tuned to patriotism and its arm trained to some measure of skill in defence. Here with all these wonderful memories of national heroes it is hard to imagine patriotism can be lacking, and yet, and yet——

Much of the fortification of the port was done by Edward IV, Richard III, and Henry VII. Henry VIII built Southsea Castle, and therefrom watched a naval fight and reviewed his army on the Common. But his son found "the bulwarkes . . . il facioned, il flanked, and set in unmete places," and proceeded to devise "two strong castellis on either side of the hauen, at the mouth thereof." Elizabeth took great interest in her naval base, and continued the fortifications her father began, the

ways and means being procured by a State lottery. Most of the old works have been demolished, and the grand elms, readers of that charming tale of bygone Portsmouth, *By Celia's Arbour*, will recall, have vanished likewise; but some links of the great chain that was put across the narrow harbour mouth in 1545 can still be seen in the shingle at low water beside the ruins of one of its round towers. The waters of the harbour run back, broaden and shallow, divide between low banks of grey mire, circle Portsea Island, lave the old Roman wall of Porchester Castle and run up a muddy creek to Fareham, five miles away, five miles of wonder! It is an ever changing spectacle: the water ripples by wharves, black and weed-grown, with a medley of buildings, tin roofs, red paint, a grey line of cranes uprising against the sky, flags and funnels



H.M.S. "Victory" from Gosport.

making gay patches of colour amid the forest of masts and spars, the big semaphore station with its jerking signals, and every vessel the wit of man can compass to conquer the seas or to serve the conquerors, from the leviathan battleship, grey, dour, unapproachable, to dredgers and coal barges. If Southampton Water was wonderful, Portsmouth Harbour surpasses it. Here, too, tugs pass fussily; the floating bridge and the ferry steamers ply from shore to shore; white yachts lift with lazy grace to the swell of beryl-green water under an ultramarine sky; and here torpedo craft, weirdest monsters of the deep, go silently about their business. The sight of those slim grey mysteries makes one long for a chance to "buy an 'am and see life," whatever the reflections of calmer moments might suggest as to the preferability of seeing it vicariously—in print! Those old hulks yonder might tell a tale worth listening to, and what

a story has that old black-and-white battleship opposite the Gunwharf with the simple inscription in the dark cockpit—HERE NELSON DIED. No need for more exhaustive epitaph than those three pregnant words for the man who left the deathless message, "England expects that every man will do his duty." But what would the great sailor think of it all could he re-visit his old haunts! Yet, if sails were more beautiful, machinery is infinitely more wonderful. In the *Vernon*, the Torpedo School, is full contrast of the ancient and modern in maritime war. You can picture men of the old stick-and-string school in the wooden battleships, but imagine their puzzled amazement at sight of the mysterious models in the class-rooms, and their helpless surprise over dynamo and torpedo! Nor would their wonder be less could they saunter round the Dockyard, though some familiar relics would greet their eyes among all the modern marvels, the block-making machinery Brunel invented in 1801, the smithy with its Nasmyth hammers, the wonders of the foundry.

The Dockyard dates from 1509, but fourteen years earlier the first dry dock ever constructed was built here of wood. An old map[1] shows the extensions and improvements then carried out. In the earliest docks gates were unknown; the entrance was blocked up after the entry and demolished at the exit of a vessel, a tedious process, and the old sluice gates in their day must have been thought as great an improvement as the caissons that have now replaced them.

By the main Dockyard entrance from the Common Hard stands the figure-head of the old *Warrior*, one of the first iron-clads. The man who carved the massive block lived on after his trade had gone, derelict as his masterpieces. Opposite is the boat pond and repairing shed, where all the boats of the Fleet, from an Admiral's launch downwards, are brought up through an old-fashioned lock to be repaired in the hospital, or sold, the fate awaiting the old anchors in Anchor Lane. For death fronts birth in the boat world also. One day the great battleship *Dreadnought* was launched, the next saw the death of the old Royal yacht *George*. The day added to the melancholy of the scene: a treacherous burst of sunshine followed gusty showers, but the rain swept down again, grey as the battleships themselves, grey sea, grey pent-in horizon, and sadly through the driving rain

[1] La Favelure. British Museum, Add. 16. 371. a.

moved the old *George* from her moorings in the Basin on her last trip, to the dry dock, where the grey curtain rose on the final scene in her existence. "To be broken up and sold." No sentiment there. After all, better ships than she have gone by the same gate, ships with greater memories. Good-bye, old *George;* we live in sternly utilitarian days and sentiment is at a discount, though at times we affect sentimentality.

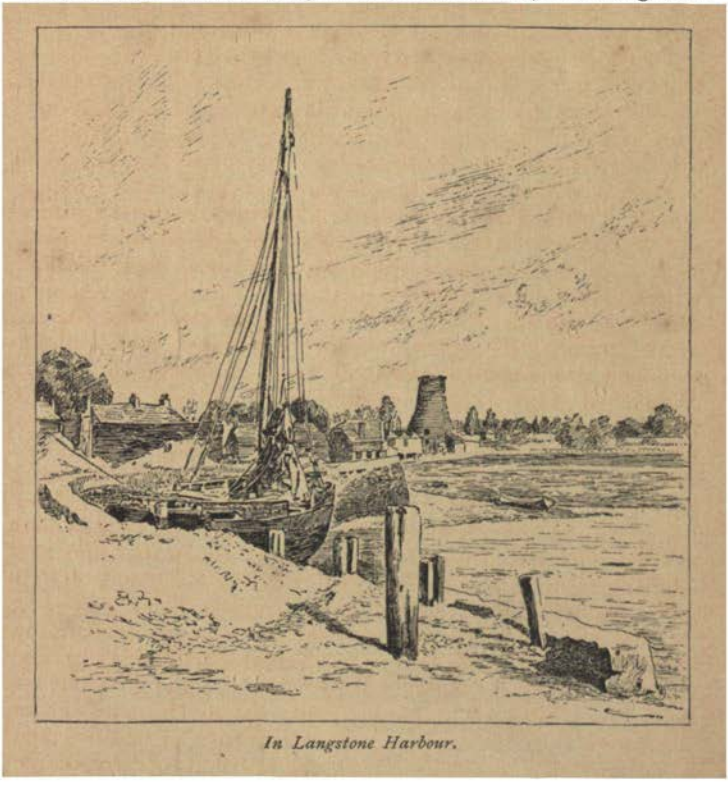
The docks lie yonder, past the Rigging House with piles of ropes and tackle on one side and a collection of curios on the other. There is the model of an old sailing man-o'-war, ninety years ago as up-to-date as the *Dreadnought* is to-day. Another bygone type is the model of a steamer that shows the method of hoisting boats before the days of davits. A telescope hanging from a figure-head between the windows recalls the sad story of the *Eurydice*, caught and dragged to her doom one Sunday, such another afternoon as yesterday, perchance, when the blue waters, flecked with cat's-paws, danced gaily under the summer sun. So, proudly, with all sail set, she came on, homeward bound. Then, many will remember if I cannot, without warning a treacherous gust over Portsdown struck her. She heeled. One rush of gurgling water driving its way through the open portholes, one wild whistling shriek as the air fought its way up through the churn and foam, the flip-flap of draggling sails, and then the white spray drifted unchecked over the swirl and smother, for vessel and crew had gone down to their long home in the deep. Two men only, battered, bruised and exhausted, survived to tell the tale before Death, who had marked them with their comrades, closed his hand. Of a piece this with the loss of the *Royal George.*

Most of the new extensions of the Dockyard were built by convict labour, and according to local report the Tichborne Claimant was for a time among the felons employed. Convicts built Fort Cumberland, away to the east by the entrance to Langstone Harbour, and the scheme for coast defence, of which it was part, that the Duke of Richmond failed to carry in the House by the Speaker giving a casting vote against it, was satirised by Gibbon in two caustic lines :—

> "To raise this bulwark at enormous price,
> The head of folly used the hand of vice."

Greatest of felons here was John Aitken, otherwise Jack

the Painter. In December, 1776, a disastrous fire broke out in the Dockyard, and the Rope House and other buildings were destroyed. This was proved later to have been no accidental conflagration. The incendiary Aitken was captured in the Raven Inn at Hook, tried at Winchester, and hung from



In Langstone Harbour.

the mast of the *Arethusa* by the Main Gate. The tarred corpse was then hung in chains at Blockhouse Point, as a warning to all ill-doers, and "Painter's Point" soon gained an unenviable reputation as the haunt of ghosts and devils. The local legend about the theft of the corpse is as well known as the doggerel lines :—

Whose bones some years since taken down,
Were brought in curious bag to town,
And left in pledge for half a crown?
Why truly Jack the Painter."

But Portsmouth is not all harbour and dockyard, it has other scenes and memories to recall.

As the Mussulman counts his years from the Hegira, as the Christian reckons time B.C. or A.D. so Portsmouth has her apotheosis and dates history from before and after the visit of the Allied Sovereigns. Napoleon was in Elba, the Treaty of Paris signed, and the potentates gathered in London, relaxed from political discussions anent a final settlement, were enjoying to the full the Prince Regent's lavish hospitality. Czar Alexander expressed a wish to see the British Fleet. Forthwith preparations on a royal scale were pressed forward, the Navy should do such honour as befitted the greatest of navies to such guests. Rank and fashion flocked to Portsmouth, the countryside gathered to a man, and many a shuttered house and shop in Southampton bore the notice "Not dead, but gone to Portsmouth"! Troops lined the gravelled roadway from Portsdown to Government House; a deafening roar of continual salutes and *feux-de-joie* from the Fleet and Batteries, the clanging of bells, the huzzas of the excited crowds, triumphal arches, processions, flags, and at night illuminations, contributed to the scene of wild enthusiasm. Nor was the effect lessened in that in those days when railway time-tables and special trains were not, the guests arrived at various and uncertain hours, so the chorus of welcome was never ending. The culminating point was reached when the Prince Regent hurried to meet the last great guest and clasping the hand of the Iron Duke exclaimed, "England's glory is now complete; it only wanted the presence of your Grace." The dinners, the reviews, the speeches, the ball, are they not written in the Chronicles of Portsmouth? One notes with a smile that the Duke "did not dance" and that Blücher, who could face unflinching the hottest of the fray, was routed by the heat of the ball-room!

With the dispersal of this brilliant assemblage ended the history of the old Governor's House, previously vacated for premises better suited to modern demands, and specially fitted up for the reception of the Regent and his guests. The

mortar on Governor's Green marks the site. It had originally been a part of the old *Domus Dei*, the "Hospital of St. Nicholas of Portsmouth vulgarly called Goddeshous," founded by Peter de Rupibus about 1212.

Two events that stand out in the history of the Hospital during the fifteenth century may be noted as signs of the times,—the murder of the Bishop of Chichester, and a complaint about moneys misspent. Bishop de Moleyns was a supporter of unpopular Suffolk, the de la Pole who married Alice Chaucer and owned Penton Grafton and Clanville. Considered an upstart by the great Barons, hated by the people, unsuccessful in his foreign policy, Suffolk's downfall was near at hand when the loss of Rouen fanned the flame of popular discontent to outbreak. De Moleyns, one of his ministers, was the first victim, "through the procurement of the Duke of York by shipmen slaine," dragged by an infuriated mob from the Chapel of the Domus Dei, and then "subjected to a cruel death." Dire penance was there to do for the sacrilegious deed; pestilence, fire and flood for half a century afflicted Portsmouth, till the erection of a chapel and absolution at length procured removed the curse! The financial peculations are another affair, and in the troublous days when the Church alone enjoyed prosperity the mischief went deeper than the ill-doings of one individual might ordinarily effect, so that it is not impossible when the Hospital was surrendered to the commissioners of 1540 some may have been influenced by the memory of the petition, "Fyrst that the powr pepull has nott their bred baked and their drynke brewed in the howsse as yt was wont for to be," for the Master "servys the powr pepull at hys pleysure, that ys, wt vere cowrse bred and smaller drynke, wiche ys contrary to all good consyens and to the foundacion wt no charyte," and worst of all, "the master that now ys maye dyspend 8 or 900 markes by the yer or mor, and kepyth ther no ospitalite, wiche ys a gret dekay to the towne." At the Dissolution most of the lands passed to the Powerscourts. No more did the sick find refuge and healing in the aisles of its great hall, and instead of services in the chapel—

"Sacre and Fawcone shott of yrone (and other shot), coilles of wollen roopes . . . . skoopes, bloke billes, morispickes, chestes of bowes and arrowes, serpentyn powder, leade sowes, dryfattes with flaskes and

toucheboxes, cassementes with hand gonnes and bowstrings . . . . collars and traces for horses . . . . lodells of latten for culveryns . . . . munychions for fireworke,"

were stored in church and chancel. In 1581 the buildings were converted into the Governor's House. Subsequently the Garrison Church—the old great hall with its chapel—suffered greatly through renovations. So far as possible the evil wrought has now been remedied and much of the original fabric yet remains in the building. Not, after all, as an architectural specimen is this Garrison Church most notable, but as a national mausoleum,—our Military Cathedral it has been called,—a place of many memories, where hang worn and tattered colours recalling heroic deeds and the price we have paid for victory the wide world over. The carved stalls and stained glass windows are each a memorial to some brave soul, and among them not a few whose names have been blazoned for all time on the scroll of British honour, as Wellington, Nelson, Moore, Hill, Outram, the Napiers, Raglan, Clyde—a gallant company.

The Parish Church was built about thirty or forty years before the Hospital by Bishop Toclive. A picture of Tudor times shows a heavy square tower above an ill-lighted irregular building among elms in a field, the *sudwede* given by Prior John de Gisors. There is a tree or so yet, but no field remaining, and it is only thanks to what in its day was considered a sad remissness on the part of the godly and ratepaying inhabitants in supplying funds that any of the old twelfth-century building is left us, for in 1693 the Poor Rate was not doubled but assessed "at six tymes the sum" it had previously been in order that "Mr. Ambrose Stanyford shall goe forward in the finishing the Church." Fortunately "after some time, dissatisfaction arose," not with "the finishing," for Portsmouth gave full meed of thanks to "the happy instrument of contriving, framing, and finishing the inside beauty of this House," but at the drain on the pockets of the public, and so Parson Heather's pious wish that the chancel might become "a beauteous structure" like the nave was never fulfilled, and the fine Early English vaulting of the chancel aisles escaped demolition. It is not often that a deficiency of funds has end so beneficial! By the middle of the last century the church, however, was in a terrible state, not unique by any

means in those days when "the improper custom," as Gilbert White rightly considered it, of intramural interments had been carried on for centuries; ventilation was unconsidered; and big box pews with heavy upholstery were dust-traps that would now be regarded with horror as so many forcing-houses for germs of disease. The evil compelled its remedy in the end, for the disturbance caused to the not very secure foundations by continual opening of vaults and fresh excavations affected the fabric, and though the congregation might not talk of microbes they suffered from them! "Persons have been obliged to leave the church from the effects of the noxious effluvia," a report of 1850 stated, and even worse consequences of the old insanitary conditions are recorded of the Garrison Church.

An elaborate monument in the chancel recalls that August Saturday in 1628 when George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, favourite of two kings, most powerful man in the English kingdom, fell dead at a blow from the shilling hunting-knife of John Felton. The house, "The Spotted Dog," in which the angry lieutenant avenged his wrongs and removed the man his party considered author and cause of all the evils afflicting the land and setting King and Parliament at odds, stands near the end of High Street, distinguished, like other historic sites in the town, with a notice on the wall that resembles a round red label off a patent medicine. An obelisk by the Clarence Pier marks the spot where Felton's body hung in chains after his execution at Tyburn. According to the story the ghost of Sir George Villiers, father of the Duke, appeared to an old friend, and implored him to expostulate with Buckingham on his ways and doings, and warn him he would die before St. Bartholomew's Day unless a radical change took place. The same story is told in the memoirs of the Duc de St. Simon; but ghost stories seldom manage to be original! Portsmouth has more than one; there is a mysterious grey lady haunts a house near the King's Bastion, a corner of the town particularly favoured by ghostly visitants; and then there is the ghost of the murdered sailor with "unconscionable whiskers" which persisted in occupying the bed where the coward blow was struck. This story has been supported by as much evidence as the most assertive spectre could desire.

Chief among the records at the Parish Church is the vellum

marriage certificate of Charles II and Catherine of Braganza, with most fearful and wonderful elaborations of the capital letters. It gives May 22, 1662, as the date, but other accounts make it a day earlier. The ceremony did not take place in either the Parish or Garrison Church, but in the Presence Chamber at Government House. Pepys, who often came here on official business, tells of some of the preparations when he "lay at Ward's the chirurgeon's in Portsmouth" before the Queen arrived. Report declared she was "a very fine and handsome lady," but her bridegroom, writing to Clarendon on the morn of the wedding, could only find "agreeableness" in her face, despite "excellent good" eyes, and though "not so exact as to be called a beauty" yet there was nothing "that in the least decree can shoque one." Poor Princess! The medal struck to commemorate the marriage, unless it libels the lady, explains this calm appraisement. It may be seen in the Museum, the old Guildhall with its pillared front in the High Street. Only a few years later the notorious "Madam Carwell," Louise de Querouaille, was made Duchess of Portsmouth by the profligate king, and presented the town with a couple of silver flagons in acknowledgment of the honour.

The fine organ is said to be the work of the great Father Smith. The story is that it was built for Toledo Cathedral but wrecked in transit on Hayling Island and thereafter secured for Portsmouth. Eight years earlier the Golden Barque on the cupola was given by Prince George of Denmark. It resembles that at St. Michael's, Queenhithe, and is six feet long. Children placed in it had, so the old tales ran, good luck for life. There are legends and stories also in connection with the bells. The Portsmouth ringers were the first to strike their bells in "slams" and there is a well known yarn about the mutiny of the bell-ringers. This was in the days when the disaffected in Portsmouth met secretly to sing "down with the Queen and the Duchess." But Anne and her Consort were popular in the town, for Prince George had pleaded for the shipwrights when Governor Gibson threatened to turn his guns on the buildings they had begun on the waste lands of Portsea, and to the Danish Prince the town attributes its possession of five of the peal of bells. The local account is that through his influence Sir George Rooke brought the bells from Dover. This story is questioned by some campanologists, but the inscriptions on

the bells support the theory that Prince George had them recast for St. Thomas's, for on the third and sixth are the words, "God Save Queen Anne, 1703," "God save our Queen, Prince, and Fleet, Anno Domini 1703," while the fifth records "Abra Rudhill, of Gloucester, cast us, 1703." The eighth bell, "Fecit 1730," bears the quaint words that the bells in *The Story of the Gadsbys* rang—"We good people all to prayers do call; we honour to King and bride's joy do bring. Good tidings we tell, and ring the dead's knell." It is a curious coincidence that the fourth bell was cast seven years later by a Joshua Kipling.

These are not the only tales connecting the last of the Stuart sovereigns with the town. Not often can a chestnut be traced to the tree on which it grew, or a proverb find its birthplace, but Portsmouth offers text and reference for the saying, "Queen Anne is dead." In the summer of 1714 a youth set out in search of fortune. Reversing Dick Whittington's proceedings, John Carter left London and fared forth into the provinces. It was a time of great national uncertainty. The Queen, it was known, lay a-dying, and of her many children none survived. The Jacobite party, had it had nominee other than the unsatisfactory Prince who claimed the rights of the Stuarts, would probably have prevailed with ease against the upholders of the Hanoverian succession; and for the most part men adopted the attitude of the old Kaffir chief who confessed he always waited to see which way the smoke from the bonfire would blow. Nowhere was greater apprehension than at Portsmouth. The Jacobite party was strong, and Governor Gibson was not the least staunch opponent of the Whigs. All watched for the signal when the failing health of the Queen should result in an empty Throne for one of the rival claimants to secure. On the first day of August, suddenly as only the long expected can be sudden, it came, and when leaving London young Carter heard instead of Bow Bells recalling him the knell of Big Ben telling that Anne was gathered to her fathers. The youth made for Portsmouth. But entrance by Portsbridge was not permitted to a stranger without question, and when, in reply, he told the guard of his tramp from the city, and incidentally mentioned the death of the Queen, he was arrested as a suspicious character and taken before the Governor. Appended to the story of a seventy mile walk the news, so

frequently rumoured before and now unexpected, gained no credence. Gibson, sceptical as the guard, consigned him to gaol, and possibly thought no more of the matter, certes made no immediate effort to put his plans into execution. Then the official message arrived with confirmation of the report. Portsmouth never declared for King Charles. But John Carter was released, and when his story got noised abroad it was taken up as a jibe against the unpopular Governor, nor could he venture into the streets without being subjected to a fire of bantering questions, "Is the Queen dead?" "Ask Gibson if he's heard *Queen Anne is dead!*"

One more tag had origin here, for Voltaire's sarcastic remark "*pour encourager les autres*," in *Candide*, referred, of course, to the trial of poor Byng for the loss of Minorca.

Many another monarch has stayed or passed through the town.—Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor, Stuart, Hanoverian; embarked for war as Edward III, welcomed a returning victor as when George III met Howe and held a *levée* after the review. Thenceforth Wimbledon's Bastion became the King's Bastion. Howe's house in Highbury Street is marked by a bust in the wall. The bust of Charles I on the King's Bastion cost £50—the bill can be seen at the British Museum. It was not made of bronze, as long was supposed, but of lead, and is the work of Le Seur, who was responsible for the two bronze figures in the nave of Winchester Cathedral. In the days of the "officious" Governor Wimbledon all passers-by were ordered to doff their hats to the bust, and sentries were put beneath to knock off with their halberts the headgear of the disloyal, or independent, who neglected to conform to the command. Wimbledon also complained that the shop signs across the roadway "do outvie his majestie's visage," and ordered them to be removed from High Street. The town seems to have been seldom on good terms with its Governor, and there are many stories of friction between municipal and military authorities, for officers were concerned with matters of strategy rather than commerce, defence was more important in their eyes than discount, and civilians chafed at military restraints. Once the Mayor is said to have requested the General in command to forbid the soldiers to walk on the footpaths—it was in the days of "Tommy get away!"—the street was good enough for them. Next day

the Commandant acceded to the Mayor's request, but issued orders that the gates were to be closed to all traffic at sundown, and no one out of uniform was to be permitted exit or entrance without the password. The Mayor withdrew defeated, and Tommy still strolls the narrow pathways. But the old gates have been removed, with the exception of the Landport Gate, which stands in its original position.

The town quarrels were not only with the military officials, there were squabbles between the municipal authorities and the commonalty, burgesses and non-burgesses; but it is quite impossible to touch on the history of the borough from the days when Richard I gave a charter for market and fair and the inhabitants received their town in fee farm from Henry III in 1230. Two burgesses were sent to the first Parliament in which Hampshire was represented, and many a well-known name is recorded among those who have been Members for the seaport town. The new town hall is said to be the finest in the south of England; the old one with the market house stood in the High Street, as Leland records.

There is no lack of interest among the town records, and the treasures in the museums would give matter for many a disquisition; the trouble is what to leave unmentioned! Burnings by the French, visitations of the plague, mutinies and revolts have been its share in plenty. The story of the stolen charter must be left, and even the running of "a carriage carrying twelve persons without horses . . . on the Mile-end Road, to the satisfaction and delight of all," as Dr. Slight recounts, with much, much more, including all account of the siege which the diarist Evelyn went to see, in 1642, after Goring declared for the King and threatened to blow up the Square Tower, that dates from the reign of Edward III, if the town were taken; whereon the besiegers came to terms for its surrender. The key that Goring threw into the harbour was dredged up eventually and is now in the Museum. When the Parliament's Frankenstein monster, the Puritan Army, turned to rend its master, Portsmouth sided with the Parliament and was again besieged. But before we leave for airier highways and greener lanes there are memories to recall of some of Portsmouth's famous sons, and corners to visit that were haunts or homes of men who won laurels in more peaceful fields than those of Mars and his watery uncle Neptune.

When Buckingham was murdered he with his wife and sister were the guests of Captain John Mason, aforetime Governor of Newfoundland, Commissary-General for the Expedition to Cadiz. Three years later Mason founded New Hampshire, and to his memory the inhabitants of that State placed a brass in the Garrison Church. Lower down High Street, at No. 74, Anson lived. He was a Staffordshire man, though he took the title of Baron Anson of Soberton. Jonas Hanway, however, was Portsmouth born. Merchant, traveller, philanthropist and author, his business took him to Spain and Persia, and his journeyings furnished matter for sundry tomes when he retired with a fortune. But it is as a public benefactor, particularly to the seafaring-folk, that his name is chiefly remembered, and the Marine Society and the Magdalen Hospital are his best memorials. Yet, when the very titles of his seventy publications are lost altogether, and his efforts to promote Sunday Schools and redress the trying lot of the chimney-sweepers are alike forgotten, one fact may keep his memory green—he was the first man to walk the streets of London under an umbrella! Another local philanthropist was John Pounds, the originator of ragged schools, and the queer little house where the cobbler lived is still in Highbury Street. Not far off stood the first local theatre, or Sadler's Wells. It was afterwards removed to where the Cambridge Barracks now abut on High Street. Portsmouth theatre has notable memories and its old playbills tell of many a time when actors whose names are now historic trod its boards. Here Edmund Kean often acted, and Kemble played *Richard III* for five guineas to an audience strictly limited to one sailor! Edmund Kean, when a lad at Southwark, ran away from home, walked to Portsmouth, and shipped as a cabin boy on a merchant vessel. Reality did not equal anticipation and his maritime career was a short one. Later he is mentioned as giving an entertainment in a room at a Portsmouth tavern, hence possibly the story has arisen that he made his *début* here. Charles Kean was buried at Catherington. The most important question when fixing the date of a performance was always would the moon be available to allow of the country gentry returning home with no better light to guide them to their destination! Such a night be sure was chosen for an event like the benefit given for widows and orphans after the Battle of Navarino, under

the patronage of Maj.-Gen. Sir James Lyon, in December ninety years ago, when a mixed company of amateurs and professionals played "Morton's admired comedy" *Speed the Plough*. One comedian enjoyed such local popularity that he was given two benefits every year, and servant girls when engaged always bargained for holidays on the nights of Johnny Floyer's benefit, equally with the right to attend Portsdown Fair. Floyer is said to have been the original of Charles Dickens' Folair in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Nicholas in search of a fortune, all remember, fell in with the Crummles party at "a roadside inn, yet twelve miles short of Portsmouth" and came to the town in their "four-wheeled phæton" behind the "strange four-legged animal" that "took his time upon the road." Here the hero appeared with "Thrice-gifted Snevellicci" and at the end "divided the applause." In none of his other works did the great novelist shift the scene to the place of his birth. The house where he was born is in Landport, on the west side of Commercial Road, No. 387, now a Dickens Museum, but young Charles was still in the nursery when the family removed to London. The font in which he was christened has been moved, it is said, to every new church that is built in the Portsea parish! Portsea was the birthplace of another novelist, Sir Walter Besant, and in his *Autobiography* he recorded memories of his youthful days, as well as in the novel aforementioned. There is some "poetic license" in the setting of Celia's story, but in the main it is a faithful picture of life in the old town, and "The Captain" was a Captain White. The Polish refugees had been exported from Prussia to the United States, but storm drove the emigrant ship to Portsmouth and here they elected to stay, occupying the old Customs House till they built their own barracks in Queen Street, and living on the 10d. a day the British Government allowed them, eked out as best might be. In *The Orange Girl* Besant again brings in the town, and Porchester figures in *The Holy Rose*.

The Blue Posts Inn that Marryat mentions in *Peter Simple* was burnt down nearly forty years ago, the Fountain Inn has become a Soldiers' Institute, but the Star and Garter at Point, with legends of many a famous admiral and the Sailor King, of the exile Louis Philippe, and of Thackeray, still offers that unrivalled view the great novelist loved, over to Gosport. Sir Walter Scott spent a week here in 1831, but Lockhart

does not tell at which hotel he put up. The George, in High Street, still shows the room where Nelson breakfasted the last morning he spent in England. The Bush Hotel at Southsea, built only some seventy years ago, stood then in a large market-garden, so rapid has been the rise of that suburb beyond the Common. The Esplanade is a queer medley of churchyard and pleasure fair with its obelisks and memorials, the *Victory's* anchor, and Russian guns juxtaposed by booths with catch-penny merchandise to attract the most miscellaneous crowds that gather there. But Southsea we may leave, for it is neither a highway nor a by-way—shall we call it a promenade?

CHAPTER XXI

TO THE CRADLE OF CRICKET

"Then fill up your glass, he's the best who drinks most:
Here's the Hambledon Club! Who refuses the toast?
Let us join in the praise of the bat and the wicket,
And sing in full chorus the patrons of cricket."

OLD SONG *in MS. History of Hampshire by Thomas Gatehouse.*

FROM its position on Portsea Island the choice of routes from Portsmouth is exceptionally limited. There is one road only past Hillsea and Cosham, with no alternative but to cross by ferry to Hayling or Gosport. Cosham has some remains of old quaintness in its irregular streets. Here the London road cuts the coast road from Chichester, swerves round past the old fair ground over the Portsdown heights with electric trams, promoted to the nominal rank of light railway, running alongside for ten miles to Horndean. The annual fair at Portsmouth was held for fourteen days on the Parade and down the High Street, as by statute permitted. It was a great time for the country people, who flocked to the booths and stalls to buy ribbons and bobbins, laces, or the delf and "Dutch drops" brought over by traders from Holland. The fair became so rowdy and such a general nuisance, blocking the roadways and annoying the residents, that the town authorities were at last forced to intervene, and an Act was obtained that enjoined its removal to Portsdown, where it gradually declined, and has now entirely ceased.

A rough road lies along the crest of the hills, parallel with the coast road, from Bedhampton to the Nelson monument at the west and on to Fareham. If the surface of the lanes leading up be uncertain and the gradients steep, there is a view to

climb for that should be compensation enough for many evils by the way. To the south, barely rising above the grey-green mud-flats, fields of golden corn, green crops, and deep indigo masses of trees fold round the long, low lines of buildings that stretch away and away to the masts of the shipping in the harbours and on the narrow seas that thread between the mainland and the Isle of Wight, dazzling silver or deep blue, as the summer lights play over. A wonderful scene when every detail stands out clear lined at noon; mysteriously beautiful when mists and sunset add colours and vagueness; grey and dreary as War and Desolation itself when the cloud wrack trails up from the ocean, and with the spindrift the moan of the labouring seas is swept inland by the hurricane. Very bleak and solitary this ridge, with its grimly silent fortifications and ugly barracks, and very far removed from the hustling crowds of workers and pleasure-seekers, the flotsam and jetsam of human material, the surging tides of progress, war, trade—and aught else that goes to the making of human motives—drive to the docks and barracks, the esplanades and pleasure grounds of the great maritime town below. To the east the view ranges over the embayed coast-land rising to the wooded and grassy Sussex Downs, with Chichester Cathedral spire for landmark on a clear day. West to Southampton Water lies "plain land and hilly," and beyond is the Forest. Here on the ridge stands the beacon-monument the survivors of Trafalgar erected in memory of their great commander, appropriate guardian of the naval headquarters. The country to the north where Beacon Hill, Old Winchester Hill, and great Butser rise conspicuous, is green, broken, well wooded and well watered, with a network of lanes and roads, good on the whole. You may pass by oaks and pines, corners with quite forest scenery still, delicate spruce and dark Scotch fir, with bracken everywhere, and dark patches of crimson heather; then to an open common with gorse and encroaching brambles which, not content with smothering hawthorn bushes, dispute for possession of the short-turfed spaces where broom in its season has vied with the gorse for glory of colouring, and in autumn bends its blue-black velvety seed-pods over its tiny cousin crowfoot, that has its own golden pageant amid the dry grasses. There are deep lanes where the trees cast a network of grey shadows on the sandy buff surface of the road, or again a turn of the way may

lead to a stream filtering through the rich growth of a marshy valley, shortly to twist once more and cross a stony hillside, with never a bit of shade or suggestion of moisture, such as the bare flank of Portsdown. Exceptional this, however, and due in part at least to military requirements. Below, on rising ground between two branches of the small Wallington River, is Southwick, a very picturesque village, with all the variety herring-bone brickwork, timber, plaster, tile and thatch can give the old cottages scattered round its streets without any set rule, sometimes square-fronting the roadway, or perched on a bank like a row of exaggerated beehives, one-storied, thatched, peeping through the roses and lilies in their gardens.

But few traces remain of the Priory of Austin Canons, founded by Henry I at Porchester and shortly afterwards removed to this valley. Henry VI bestowed forest privileges —some would have it that here he wed his bride from Anjou. The Priory had its troubles and scandals before the downfall of the monastic houses; there was a question of complicity on the part of one Prior in the forgery of Papal Bulls; doubtful balance-sheets betrayed another. At the dissolution it was granted to John White, first Steward of Portsmouth, who complained that the furnishing of the house was poor and in bad repair. From the Whites the property passed to the Nortons, and it was in the chapel here, when on a visit to that family, King Charles was told by Sir John Hippesley of "Steenie's" violent death at Portsmouth.

The winding green lane that leads towards Fareham joins the road from Hambledon just by the small church at Boarhunt, which has some of the original Saxon work left in pilaster strips, quoins, and a quaint old window, deeply splayed, with moulding like a heavy twisted plait, which fortunately can be seen from outside, for it has never been my luck to find the church open; indeed the impression left by the little building, the aged churchyard-yew and tombstones at all angles among the rank grasses, is one of loneliness and melancholy, more in keeping with the bleak hills to the south than the wooded vales.

Fareham does not figure like her neighbours in any dramatic history. Her seaborne trade, her mills, tanneries, and potteries, have ever been her chief concern; and if shops have replaced the fairs that were held in the broad streets, and rail and

tram long ago superseded the coaches, she retains her measure of prosperity and her importance as a junction between the inland towns and villages and the coast. Fareham consists mainly of two wide streets with irregular houses of uncertain age, but, as a rule, with an air of comfortable stability. A winding creek, from Portsmouth Harbour circles between the town and Cams Hall, and the Wallington there finds outlet, passing under rail and roadway, a very picturesque corner when the blue waters drown the muddy weeds and wash against the old mills and buildings, but, like all these marshlands, not quite so pleasing at low tide!

Old Mill at Fareham.

Fareham Mill stood there by the creek when Domesday Book was compiled, and back past memory of man on St. Peter's Eve the mill-pond has been drained, and the eels and fish in the mud have been free trove for the gathering. Further down West Street, by the corner where the Gosport trams turn off, is an old fashioned, bay-windowed house, with a small grass plot in front. This is the Library, and the name above the door is Thackeray House. It is, moreover, not so pretentious and unmeaning as names too often are in these days of ultra-extraordinary domiciliary nomenclature—the subject admits of no simple words! It is Thackeray House by

right indisputable, for in that bay window, when the nineteenth century was yet young, a small boy sat writing letters to parents half the world away in India, and signed them William Thackeray. No more fitting end could the house have than to become the local reading-room and library.

The Parish Church is in the other thoroughfare, and little enough of the Early English church remains, for the greater part was blown down in the fearful storm of 1703. The old chancel is now a side chapel. The chancel of the present church is modern, the tower and nave were rebuilt when architecture in England was at its most hopeless stage of Georgian ugliness. Truly Georgian also is the inscription on the tenor bell :—

> " In vain the Rebls strive to gain Renown
> Over our Church, the Laws, the King, and Crowne
> In vain the bold ungratfull Rebls aim
> To overturn when you support the same,
> Then may great George our King live for to see,
> The rebllious crew hang on the gallows tree."

This refers to the rebellion of 1745. An old epitaph on a ledger stone is also worth noting :—

AN EPITAPH

On the truly worthy Emmanvel Bad Esqvire.
Reader knowst thow who loges here
Ile tell thee. When I have I feare
Thovlt scarce beleeve me tis goode Bad
Noe contradiction neither I have had
The triall of this truth and on this stone
Engrave this wish now hee is gone
Soe good a Bad doth this same grave contain
Wovld all like Bad were that with vs remaine
Here deceased August
The xviii, 1632.

Fareham must early have been of importance from its position at the head of Portsmouth harbour. Portsdown formed the southern rampart of Nature's fortress here, the Forest of Bere, part of the great Anderida Forest, lay between its long ridge and the high barrier of the Downs, so that only up the valley passes could strangers win their way. Hither came the Jutes, and in the fertile valleys founded the Kingdom of the Meonwaras. Whether they came from Jutland, or were Goths, or

the Eudoces, neighbours of the Angli, historians have yet to decide; each school supports its own theory; enough for us that they were among the first of the tribes who made their way into Roman Britain from the low shores of North Germany. Here, secure in the isolation of these natural defences, their settlements flourished and remained long independent and unperturbed by the successive invasions that swept over the land, and to-day traces of their occupation are to be found all up the valley of the Meon, and at Droxford a Jutish cemetery was laid open lately by a railway cutting.

One is rather apt to think of Fareham as in the Meon valley, so direct is the communication by rail and road, but actually the town is in the watershed of the Wallington, though the Meon flows under its fourteenth-century bridge within two miles to the west, where the Southampton road passes through Titchfield. This quaint and very "ancient market town" has several delightful old weather-worn houses, half timber, plastered, with now and then projecting upper stories. Some of the old roofs are green with stonecrop or hidden under thick bronze moss, and the walls are garlanded with Virginia creeper that dims even the blaze of new red brick! Long before the Norman king made his great survey was *Ticefelle* an important settlement. It had a mill, market, and toll place in the days of the Confessor, and part of its Norman church stands to this day; some, indeed, claim to see Saxon work as well as Roman tiles in the rough masonry by the west porch with its fine Norman arch. The chief interest of the church is the chantry on the south of the chancel. When this was added the original Norman wall was cut and two Early English arches opened through it from the chancel. By one arch a brass tablet and Union Jack are records of the South African war. The flag, a note informs one, was the first to fly over Government House in Pretoria when a Governor was appointed after Lord Roberts' entry in 1900. The Memorial Chapel of the Southampton family was built in accordance with the bequest of the second Earl, who willed the large sum of £1,000—more than ten times that value to-day—for the purpose. The elaborate alabaster monument is one of the finest in the county and has lately been very carefully restored. Slender Perpendicular pillars separate the nave from a north aisle, an addition of William of Wykeham's according to local saying,

though architectural details do not confirm this tradition but suggest a later date.

Half a mile away to the north in Wykeham's day stood the fine Premonstratensian Abbey of St. Mary's, founded in 1222 by Peter des Roches, and colonised from the Shropshire Abbey of Halesowen. It was the last house of White Canons established in England. In 1537 Titchfield Abbey was given with other monastic spoils to Thomas Wriothesley, the Lord Chancellor, and he pulled much of it down and built the fine embattled house that stands to-day a grey ruin in the solitude of its walled garden. The *Victoria County History* gives a most interesting account of the life led by the brethren of the order.[1] By the Premonstratensian rule much time was devoted to reading, and the library was an important feature of the house. Very excellent the methods and most comprehensive the rules for the librarian's guidance seem to have been. The books were kept in cases in the cloisters, and each bore a letter and number to mark its shelf and place thereupon. There were in all some 224 volumes of MS. books here and also an itinerary that gave the mileage to all the other houses of White Canons. When reading the brothers were always to wear slippers, and should one leave his seat his book must either be replaced or left in charge of his neighbour. One commendable rule—that the officials and methods of some modern libraries by no means help readers to observe!—was that no time be lost at starting. When the monastic dissolution began the books in the Titchfield library as well as the reputed riches of the house were conspicuously non-existent, but the catalogue of the old library is preserved at Welbeck.

The records of the establishment are not altogether concerned with such pursuit of wisdom, nor only with the religious obligations of the Canons. Their nightly prayer, by-the-by, has rather an abracadabra sound about it:—

"*In Monte Ceylon requiescent septum Dormientes, Malchus, Maximus, Constantius, Dionysius, Serapion, Martinianus, atque Johannes. Per istorum merita det michi Deus noctem quietam et soporem quietam.*

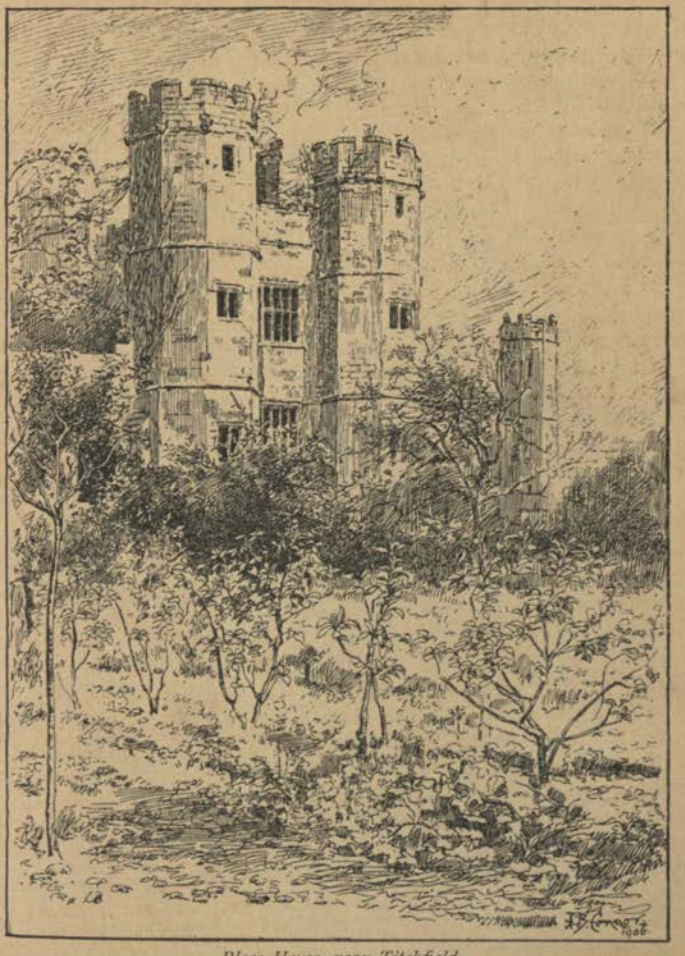
Perchance the repetition of the resonant names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus would have as soporific an effect as the

[1] *Hampshire*, vol. ii. pp. 181–4.

device of counting sheep going through a gate, or any other potent spell to bind reluctant sleep on tired eyelids! But sometimes a brother passed the night watches otherwise; William Gloucester, for instance, broke bounds and spent the night *bibendo et rixando*, Bishop Redmayne's visitation discovered, and Ralph Atmynster stole the fish out of the Abbey ponds: vanity also misled sundry, and in 1500 they fell to the pomps and vanities of tonsures of non-regulation cut and shave, and the latest fashion in black hoods: so not always was the episcopal report *prospera et immaculata!*

If Southwick cannot make good her claim to be the place where Henry of Windsor married his convalescent bride no more can Titchfield, rival for that honour. Ill-fated the match, evil the portents that preceded the ceremony. Margaret, landing at Southampton, fell ill there, in God's House, of the small-pox, and on recovery came, it is said, to one of these abbeys to meet the young King. Shakespeare, it is interesting to note, ignores the claims of either. The great poet-dramatist is no historical authority that we should accept his word against other records, his perversions are as many as they are deliberate. But here the question turns on a local point, for a very pretty tradition connects Shakespeare with this place. Experts may be able to suggest why that great collector and adapter of tales opened the second part of his *King Henry VI* in London and made the meeting of Henry and "the fairest queen"—no hint, you see, of late disfiguring illness—take place there, rather than in the more romantic setting he might have given at Titchfield, if he knew it. Certes stories of a Royal wedding in the previous century would in all likelihood have lingered here when Shakespeare visited his patron the third Earl of Southampton. But the question of such visits plunges one into a dark maze of speculation to which none have found the clue. It remains, then, for individual choice. An you wish for a pretty story you may believe—and read it most charmingly told[1]—that the W. H. of the puzzling dedication to the *Sonnets*, and the "fair youth" therein immortalised, is none other than H. W.—Henry Wriothesley—the kneeling figure at the west end of the Southampton monument on the chancel side—; that the

[1] Vaughan, *The Wild Flowers of Selborne.*



Place House, near Titchfield.

romantic tale of his wooing and wedding Elizabeth Vernon suggested the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*; and that Will Shakespeare stayed with his friend at Place House, and may have wandered round the little market town, perchance visited

Stubbington, a small village between Titchfield and Rowner, when the sports, that were kept up till eighteenth-century Whitsuntide holidays, bull baiting, single stick and cudgel playing, were in progress—did not Shakespeare know and enjoy them well? Certain is it that Southampton was a friend and patron of the poet, whose first published work *Venus and Adonis* was dedicated to him in 1593.

But if doubt attach to visits from Shakespeare there is none whatever concerning other great guests. That massive door opened to admit more than one monarch within the walls of the Place House: Edward VI on his way to visit Portsmouth and Netley; his sister seventeen years later; and poor Charles I, seeking refuge in his flight from Hampton Court, set forth from here, prisoner in all but name, on the path that led from Carisbrooke to the final tragedy at Whitehall. On the death of the fourth Earl the vast estates were divided between his coheiresses. The property was subsequently sold towards the end of the eighteenth century to Peter Delmé, husband of the Lady Betty of Reynolds' famous picture. The Delmés preferred Cams Hall to the old Palace House, which they used as a quarry when they rebuilt the Fareham mansion, so to-day only a shell remains of massive wall, fine Tudor brickwork, twisted chimneys, and mullioned windows from which the ivy droops and hangs in clusters by the towers, where starlings and jackdaws nest undisturbed, and owls hoot dismally when the pale moon peeps athwart black shadows on the grassy floors. It is a fine ruin yet in its sheltered garden, destroyed more by the hand of man than Time.

The lane that passes the Abbey ruins leads up the Meon valley by shady reaches of that cheerful trout stream, low hills, green meadows, and old farmsteads—Great Fontley Farm is an ideal picture of an old building as seen from the roadway where a lane bends away from the river to run by hill and wood to Shirrell Heath. Much new building and good golf links have invaded the wilds where twenty years ago the lily-of-the-valley was all that attracted a visitor to the common—it is still to be found, if rarer every year. Wickham, the birth and name place of the great Bishop, lies in the valley where the London and Winchester roads divide. Of its picturesqueness there is no question, the broad Place, where tourneys of old were held, the houses without rule or order of all dates and

styles, the river passing by the mill and bridges, and the grey church among the trees beyond the railway. Some of the beams in the mill, they say, came from the redoubtable *Chesapeake.*

Very rich is the valley of the Meon in the green youth of the year, or when summer wanes and autumn loads extravagant colour over the irregular hedgerows, and the aftermath shows green through the dry grasses. Old chalk-pits break the bronze and gold with violet shadows on their grey and white scars, and the deep green woods on the hillsides stand out above sweeping folds of dusty brown turf or acres of russet stubble. Flocks of gulls, peewits and rooks follow the plough, black and white on the freshly turned reddish earth; and black and white too are the flocks of sheep on the pastures. Beacon Hill, with woods hanging from one side of its smooth turfed poll, like a half-clipped poodle, and Old Winchester Hill with the dark lines of an ancient camp searing its crest, stand sentinel on either side the pass to the uplands. Villages cluster along the valley, and some of the forest lingers more than nominally, though Waltham Chase is little more than a name which recalls the stories Gilbert White had to tell of the Waltham Blacks and days when poaching was more serious in every sense than now. The wild woodlands, where the Bishops of Winchester had their deer park, have become part of the fruit-growing country that has Botley for centre, and the chase of the deer is exchanged for the cult of the strawberry. But it may be questioned if White would find "the morals of the people" as much bettered by the removal of the temptation the deer offered as opponents of sporting rights would have one believe, and Dr. Hoadly doubtless hoped when he refused to restock the episcopal chase. His Satanic Majesty has not lost his ability to find "mischief still"!

Soberton, on the east bank of the Meon, a mile below Droxford, should not be passed without recalling the story of the church tower, built by a butler and a dairymaid, and restored recently by means of a fund raised among the Hampshire servants: hence the signs of office—the butler with his key, the maid with her pail. Part of the Transition Norman building remains, and there are some Decorated windows, mural paintings and memorials to the Curles, lords of the manor—one was Bishop of the diocese—to be seen within. In the Curle

chapel is a great sandstone coffin with a corpse preserved in cement. This may have lain for fifteen or sixteen centuries in the neighbouring field where it was discovered nearly thirty years ago. Another find in the vicinity was the effigy in Droxford Church—there is Norman work there also—about which much is conjectured but nothing known with certainty. When the rector, Dr. Preston, "for his eminent loyalty had been shamefully entreated" by the Puritan powers, the great altar tomb in the south chapel was destroyed, and the Purbeck marble figure is said to have been buried in an adjoining meadow. This was the tomb of the mother of John de Drokenford, Bishop and Chancellor, who was baptised here. Preston lived to return to his rectory and restore the church, but why did he leave the effigy buried?

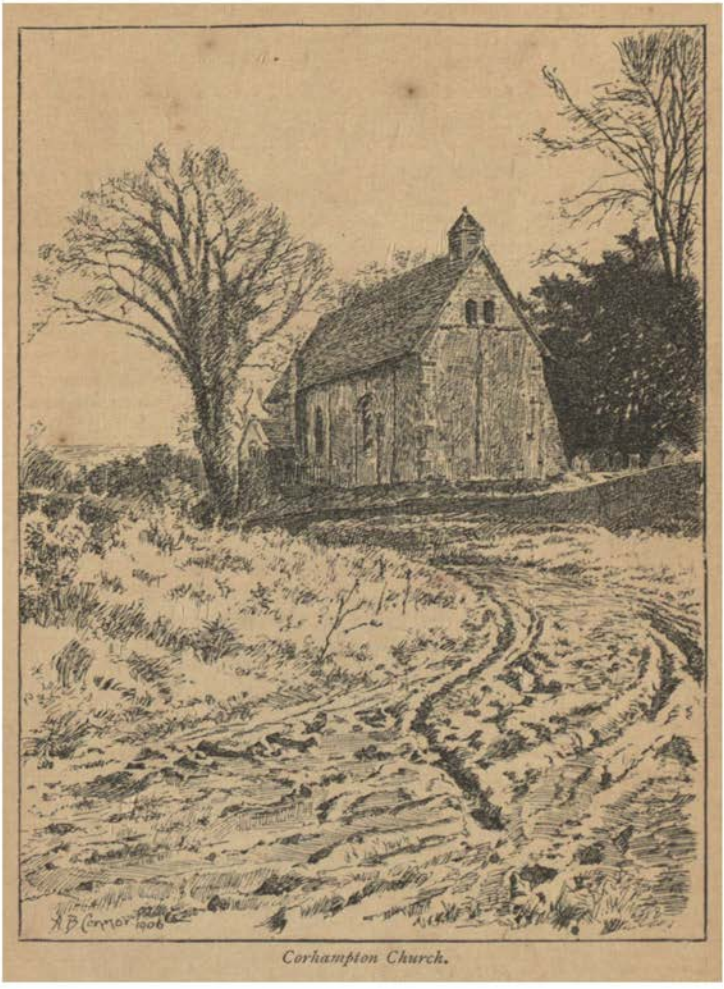
Another seventeenth-century rector, Dr. Hawkins, married the daughter of Izaak Walton, and in this Droxford Rectory—somewhat altered and enlarged since his day—the old angler spent much of his last years, by the "silent silver stream" of the Meon in the peaceful country he loved so well. Would that Walton had written such a book of the valley as White wrote of his Selborne home! But White was a careful historian, and *The Compleat Angler* betrays a hankering after curiosities and marvels with less regard for fact than serious record admits of! Yet what a wealth of local sayings, quaint customs, with odds and ends of country lore and wisdom, was lost when "Izaak Walton, the elder, of Winchester," spent laborious hours in the house of his friend, Bishop Morley, penning the lives of Hooker and Herbert, instead of an autobiographical account of his fishing days in Hampshire, which, he considered, "exceeds all England for swift, shallow, clear, pleasant brooks, and store of trouts." There be plenty of speckled beauties in the clear waters of the Meon winding through these meadows where, doubtless, the old angler watched them many a day and oft, sat "under this honeysuckle hedge," to repeat one of the marvellous observations he loved to quote, or, with equal simplicity and charm, the verse of "holy Mr. Herbert," before trying "to catch the other brace of trouts." The Mr. John Darbyshire to whom Izaak left a book of sermons and a mourning ring was curate at Droxford. Walton willed a ring also to Mr. Francis Morley, nephew of the Bishop and once owner of the old Jacobean manor house here.

Meonstoke stands by the river on slightly rising ground, a mile to the north. The church has Norman, Early English, and Decorated work in its fabric, and a black marble font; the "rose" of William of Wykeham in the chancel moulding may testify to some rebuilding by the great Bishop. Nearly all the houses in the village are old, with mellowed brick, lichen-stained tile, or brown and heavy thatch. There was a curious trove of hidden treasure here in 1441, when "there fell a great multitude of rats" into the malt-room of the parsonage, and during the rat-hunt that followed the servants found four gold nobles, and, with further search, twenty pounds in gold. Thomas Wassaille, the rector, was "ignorant of how it came there," so the Crown claimed it, but as "by tempest of wind five houses belonging to the parsonage were thrown down to the rector's great loss," Henry VI wrote to the Lord Chancellor, Wassaille was permitted to keep the find. Less detail is available about a local version of the Biblical Ananias and Sapphira story. The burial register records that on December 10, 1778, Elizabeth Erwaker was buried, and beneath is the note :—

"Fell dead on appealing to God in confirmation of a lie."

One wonders what tragedy is hidden in that sentence.

Across the Meon, at Corhampton, was the home of another Hampshire crack in the palmy days of the Hambledon Club, James Aylward, who made a record score of 167 runs against All England in 1777. Corhampton is known to fame as possessing a small church that, despite absence of mention in Domesday Book, may be reckoned among the Saxon remains in the county. The old flint rubble, much-patched walls, with their greystone quoins and narrow pilaster strips, the sundial, the old stone seat by the altar—the original apse fell down, so the chancel end is more modern—the round font with cable moulding, and the chancel arch are as venerable almost as the yew in the litten. The building has been carefully restored and is beautifully kept. The interior is most simple, and though the seats are new, the oak, wisely left unstained, harmonises well with the soft tones of grey and creamy buff of the old stones and beams overhead. An epitaph to an octogenarian, William Wilson, dated 1694, is very much to the point :—



Corhampton Church.

"Both Old And Yong
Make Ready for ye Day
For When Death coms
then None Can Stay."

But if the Hambledon cricketers are to be reached, we must not dally too long by the Meon, and may hurry through Exton, with its well-kept churchyard the church was partly rebuilt sixty years ago—and might cross the river to the lane that runs up the valley by Old Winchester Hill—remembering that its camp is well worth the climb to see, and the views from it grand—and on by Westend Down; or taking the other lane from Meonstoke go by the race-course and between Stoke Wood and Grenville Copse to the road in the valley where some modern villas show below the beech hanger on the crest of the Down, and so to the old metropolis of cricket. Yet it is worth making a further detour up the valley to Warnford and the Meons, for the road is good, and if Warnford Park is an ugly building, as seen from the bridge, modernised past all recognition of its Elizabethan origin, there are many pretty peeps where the clear water trickles through cress beds, or the Meon stream broadens to a pool, with water-fowl darting in and out among the green sedges, wading and grub hunting by the muddy marge; and the orange tints of the many chestnut trees in autumn, set against the bronze of beech and yellowy-green of elms, make a fine note of colour in the landscape. The George Inn must have been a comfortable tavern in the days when the coaches drew up by its spacious frontage. The small church, by the ruins of a Norman manor-house of the de Ports—"King John's," or more properly St. John's House—in the Park grounds, was founded by St. Wilfred in the seventh century, when he came to Sussex after his expulsion from the bishopric of York. The Meon valley was conquered by the Mercian king Wulphere and made over to his Jutish allies, who were among Wilfred's earliest converts. The present tower with its pairs of round windows is Norman, but some of the old stones, as well as the sundial, similar to that at Corhampton, belonged to a previous Saxon building, if not to Wilfred's church. The history of the structure, mainly Early English, is told in the Latin inscriptions on the north wall and in the south porch:—

"*Adam hic de Portu, solis benedicat ab ortu*
Gens cruce signata, per quem sum sic renovata."

"*Fratres orate, prece vestra sanctificate*
Templi factores, seniores et juniores
Wilfrid fundavit, bonus Adam sic renovavit."

"Good folks, in yr devotions ev'ry day
For Adam Port, who thus repair'd me pray."

"All you that come here,
Bestow a kind pray'r
On the churches builders,
Both youngers and eiders;
What pious Wilfred rais'd
Good Adam increas'd"

as Gatehouse translated. Within is a Norman font, some fifteenth-century benches, and the Neales' fine monument:—

"The marbles that adorne this mournful tombe
Doe sweat their vocal teares tho they be dombe
And every change of weather doe portend
What pious mind should doe at such an ende
Then let each one that seeeth this with an eye
Quite void of moisture be turned stone and dry."

Wrote the Jacobean epitaphist. The lines suggest the situation must have been uncommonly damp, and a punning couplet written when Lord Clanricarde was living here also refers to the state of the property before the marshy grounds were drained, at which time it was known as Belmont, hence the jibe:—

"Oh what a blundering Irish dog,
Who calls this a mount, when 'tis but a bog!"

There are many old bits of gable, thatch, tile, and timber among the houses of West Meon. Among the trees by the highway where a lane turns off to the church, a monument was erected to a local doctor and his wife "by the last surviving of their sixteen children." The ornamentation round the inscription is, appropriately, olive branches! A stone wall and yew hedge effectively shut out all view of the church, and the gate was padlocked. My regret was solely due to inability to look for the grave of Thomas Lord, the proprietor of the original Lord's Cricket Ground—now Dorset Square—and later of the present M.C.C. ground at St. John's Wood, who was buried here, for when Archdeacon Bailey rebuilt the church in the 'forties he left none of the old Norman or Saxon structure.

The road to East Meon passes by Westbury House, in the grounds of which are the ruins of a small Decorated chapel.

The tomb by the font is supposed to be that of Sir Robert le Ewer, who had permission from Edward II to crenellate the manor-house, and probably built the chapel. East Meon is sufficiently removed from beaten tracks to be unspoilt; the scenery is superb; it has the finest village church in the county, a twelfth-century Court House, and cottages that for age and oddity hold their own with any in the land. The village nestles in the deep valley by the little Meon stream that trickles down from its springs on the flanks of the great chalk hills that rise to the south, Salt Hill with an elevation of

Old Court House, East Meon.

765 feet, Hyden and Tegdown Hills somewhat less, with Butser's 889 swelling up to the south-east. The wooded crest of Henwood Down and rounded sweep of Park Hill lie on either side the valley, where road and river pass to West Meon; or turning east to Petersfield the road runs by Barrow Hill, with magnificent views of the great Downs, grassy slopes, wood, rough hedgerow, melting into the blue distance. As for colour, whether you take the blues and greens of spring or the gorgeous display of autumn's reds and yellows, there is richness and variety enough. Lanes more or less steep and rough lead over the hills, and very wonderful are some of the peeps

down to where the silent streams flow along the green valleys, where the beech woods make a golden tunnel overhead, and scatter a red-brown carpet to the very edge of the sandy track.

The church when I visited the valley was undergoing restoration, but despite ladders, planks and buckets it was possible to see—and to see is to admire—the fine proportions of the Norman cruciform church, with its central tower—the arcading on the exterior reminds one of Romsey—but the font, the fourth of the celebrated square black fonts, with carvings of the Creation and fall of Adam and Eve, was covered, nor did I find the stone in the floor with inscription "Amens Plenty." During restorations in 1870 the old sanctus bell, that till then hung in a window of the tower, was stolen. Bishop Walkelin is credited with the building of this beautiful church, except possibly the tower, which may be earlier, and the south aisles and chancel, which are Early English additions. Across the road is the Court House where the Bishop's court used to be held, a very beautiful old building bowered in creepers.

The road to the south up Hyden Hill leads through wood and over open spaces direct to our objective, Broadhalfpenny Down. Now there be three games under the sun worthy of the name of pleasure, yea four that be worth the playing, and of these three are concerned with the elemental toys a ball and a stick! To those who have no memories of hot summer days on close-turfed cricket-fields, it is vain to sing the pleasures of the game; the expectancy as the ball whizzes down, the delight of mastery when no change of bowling suffices to puzzle and the score mounts rapidly by threes and fours, or of success when a wicket falls or of triumph when you hold an impossible catch in deep field! joys that cricketers, even the humblest, know. Why, there is a smell about the very grass, close-cut and rolled, a crushed green smell that awakes a hundred memories I, for one, would be loth to be without. And cricket is Hampshire's by right almost undisputed, by right of early pre-eminence without question. If it was first called "crickett" at Guildford, it first became the national game at Hambledon. The club was started in the middle of the eighteenth century, was reformed some twenty years later and then entered on its days of victory. 1778 saw All England playing them for 1000 guineas, and 29 times in ten years did the Hambledon Club beat the English XI. Not always was

money the reward of victory, a match in 1783 was played "for eleven pairs of white corded dimity breeches and eleven handsome striped pink waistcoats"! Those were great days for Hambledon. Nyren, of the George Inn and the Bat and Ball, catered for visitors; beef, ham, chickens, tarts, were provided "for good appetites," his advertisement announced, and the ladies had to be content with the fine Down air and these solid comestibles "in the place of Marbres, Aspiques, Blancmanges" or such trivialities! Nyren did more than cater, he was a cricketer also, and moreover a musician and writer, his *Cricketers Guide and Recollections* gives the best account of early cricket and cricketers that exists. "Little Hambledon pitted against All England, was a proud thought for the Hampshire men," says this text-book. The versatile writer tells how, "whenever a Hambledon man made a good hit, worth four or five runs, you would hear the deep mouths of the whole multitude baying away in pure Hampshire—'go hard!—go hard!—*Tick* and turn!—*tick* and turn!'" But tempting as the theme is we must leave the good company of the Hambledon men, Lumpy and Brown, the best fast and slow bowlers of their day; Peter Stewart, landlord of the Green Man; Harris, who defeated any but first class bats, such as Beldham and Lord Frederick Beauclerk; Edward Aburrow, George Leer, and many another. Beldham was a Wrecclesham man and so was John Wells, Harris came from Crookham, Noah Mann from Northchapel, Hogsflesh from Southwick, William Barber and Thomas Brett from Catherington—of which anon. The original club broke up in 1791.

Hambledon is some miles from the railway, but excellent roads connect it with all the country round, and make it a good centre from which to visit this neighbourhood. It is a pretty old place and its church is most interesting, for the original Saxon building can be seen within the present Norman and Early English structure. The Norman arches of the nave with their unique mouldings were pierced through the old walls, and part of the pilaster strips remain above them visible from the north and south aisles. A description of the building and its history is hung up for the benefit of visitors. The direct road from Hambledon to Petersfield runs by the old cricket ground, leaving Park House on the left. Here lived Laud of Hambledon Hunt fame,

whose hounds hunted in the Forest of Bere, deer during the summer months, foxes in the winter, and, says "Æsop," would after a day or so stick to their fox and pass the very deer that a few weeks before had been their quarry. The Hunt balls and suppers at Hambledon, not to mention the races, were almost as attractive as the cricket matches!

To the south-west of Broadhalfpenny Down lies a farm with a curious history. The property was sold, so runs the local tale, by Squire Higgins to a Quaker at Havant. The deal was ended, the papers signed, when the Quaker came to the conclusion that he had been defrauded in some measure and indignantly refused to have ought further to do with the place, declaring that neither he nor his should put foot on the land or touch so much as a blade of grass from off it. He had, however, gone too far in the matter of purchase to withdraw from the transaction, the money had to be paid, Glidden was his. But a Quaker's word, even if spoken hastily in the heat of righteous wrath and indignation, is a bond. At any rate the Havant member of the Society of Friends so regarded it. Legally it might be his, actually he would prefer to stand the financial loss than take possession. The house was left untenanted, the lands lay uncared for and unguarded, stray beasts eat the hay, the crops were anyone's for the gathering, and so the wilderness was let in, weeds rioted over the untilled fields and choked the forsaken garden; only the wild creatures of the air and the field sought shelter in house or barn; till finally Government intervened and sold the property. So closed this extraordinary chapter of local history. Now, the very story is forgotten, except by one or two old residents. The man who told me had known the Quaker's family in his youth.

The village of Catherington, already mentioned, is scattered along a lane that runs south from Clanfield by Catherington Down and joins the Portsmouth Road at Horndean. The scenery is wild, the road rough. Archæologists will visit it to see the Norman church and mural paintings. There are also two early seventeenth-century effigies of Sir Nicholas Hyde and his lady; an estimable couple doubtless, but the personality of greatest note here is he whose mural tablet is on the wall behind, General Sir Charles Napier, Conqueror of Scinde.

Napier had too decided a character to escape enemies, even had success not come to add the sharp tooth of jealousy to

dislike. "I am dead Wellingtonian" he wrote when Admiral Napier, "Black Charles," canvassed Portsmouth in 1834. So determined was his attitude in all matters, military or political, that *The Times*, which sided with the opposite party, refused in 1848 to insert a notice of his reception at Portsmouth, even when the mayor offered to pay for it as an advertisement! But he lived to see a different tone adopted, for after the funeral of the great Duke, when he was one of the pall-bearers, the same paper drew consolation from his presence, "there was still a mighty man of battle before them." Of his many military writings it is as needless to speak as of his career. He lived for some years at Merchistown Hall, by Horndean, devoted to his garden and a good friend to the poor of the neighbourhood. His funeral was almost as great an event at Portsmouth as the visit of the Allied Sovereigns. He died "like a soldier," six months before the stern realities of the Crimean War began to prove how true were the warnings he and the Duke had never ceased to urge on the consideration of politicians. In a letter written nine months previously are words that beat re-quoting to-day :—

"I have a wife, daughter, and ten grandchildren ; and I have a house and some land here, near Portsmouth. These form a '*vital stake*' to me in the safety of England, or the devil's in the dice ! . . . I know England, *if prepared*, can defy the world : I know also that, as she is, she cannot resist 20,000 French troops thrown on her southern coast, where I and my children live ! . . . and this because our governments do not place us, as we ought to be, strong as a rock against waves ! . . . but when the Duke of Wellington was not attended to, speaking is hopeless—who will be heard ?"

CHAPTER XXII

BY HANGER HEATH AND HOLLOW

" Skid or Puncture Devil harries
By the way,
And my ancient two-wheel tarries
By the way,
While the latest motor carries
You away !"
My Bike to Your Motor.

ONCE the scenery and colouring of chalk country grip you, whatever your previous loves may have been, you are its slave for life. You may watch the mists sweep over the mountains of Wales, folding them in a mystery of wrappings that fall apart at a touch of the sun and disclose the stern grey giants hid in the heart of the dimness ; or on the wide expanses of Galway bog, rich coloured, with deep heather above the dark bog holes and treacherous smiling, green, spaces, mark the sunset lights flare up to high heaven behind old Croagh Patrick ; you may find grander scenes and more vivid colouring in other places ; but nowhere more subtle play of light and shade, more delicate tones and sudden changes than the chalk Downs make their own. If one day they lie in monotonous lifelessness, the sunset may deck them with every shade of blue and violet, and the next day show deep purple cloud-shadows rolling over smooth green flanks, and wisps of grey mist wreathing up from the hidden sea. Then the skyscape, God's untouched handiwork which man's paltry interference cannot mar, though he destroy the face of the uplands and defile the secret places of the valleys ; over all it arches full, like the Downs, of infinite change, yet changeless ; unsullied even if the reek of men's

cities hide it awhile from our ken—mute protest rising to the heavens, the veil that till man's curse be worked to its fulfilment ever intervenes between their full glory and the groaning, travailing world. Are not these open spaces then holy ground? Though no mountain top of awful grandeur but clear, clean, wholesome and invigorating as the winds that sweep round their curves in waving ripples through the ripening crops, scattering the downy seedlets of grey-headed thistles washed silver by the sun. And always the most absolute finish, the perfection of curve and outline. It is this finish which gives such a sense of great age everywhere. "As it was in the beginning is now," and almost one could believe ever must so continue. To the dweller in cities, pent between prisoning walls with never more than a few inches, or at best yards of the sky, and that not of the clearest, it is impossible to convey the spirit of these open downlands. It defies analysis. To understand it you must go there, but before you go in every sense take off your "office coat." Forget there are any such things as stocks, except the garden variety. Forget there are such iniquitous things as business or politics. Remember only you have a stake in a noble heritage, how noble you may never fully realise till you see it; and when you hear the echoes startled by firing on a lonely rifle range—as you will, for village rifle clubs abound—admit that a share in its defence is not only an obligation but an honour!

Right over the back of the Downs runs the highway to London, the far famed Portsmouth road; and once Horndean is passed it is more wild and lonely than any other main road in the county. The sweeping curves of the chalk hills are now tree dotted, anon vast grassy banks broken only by the turfed furrow of an ancient trackway, or a flock of pasturing sheep. On either hand they roll round, swell and dip to quiet valleys, flanked by shelving woods and broad golden acres of cornland, and ahead they sweep up to beautiful War Down and great Butser with its old roads, Roman camp, and British earthworks. And as we do not share the Voortrekkers' real devotion to an utter isolation, which the sight of smoke from however distant a neighbour's chimney sufficed to rob of its charm, these solitudes are the more delightful in that, for all seeming remoteness, they are within a stone's

throw of human life. Hidden in protecting fold and hollow, and among the woods themselves, stand cosy farmsteads and old-world hamlets, and more than one curling smoke rack has added value to that picture.

From Butser itself the view is magnificent, over hill and dale from the Downs in the north-west away to the blue heart of the Sussex Weald; south to the sea and the Island; and in the west, they say, Salisbury Cathedral spire can be seen against the sky line. Climb up the grassy flank that rises above the cutting through which the road is carried over the col, and to the north-east you will get as typical a view of South Down scenery as heart can desire. The close turf of War Down, that rises opposite, sweeps from the rounded crest in exquisite unbroken line to the trees in the valleyland below. Most characteristic of all, the smooth gigantic bank is scarred by a huge chalk pit; yet even there the line is perfect, and the violet and grey shadows on the white *khud* but give an added beauty to the whole. The tinkle-tinkle of the sheep bells, among the creeping white specks on the shelving bank, comes like fairy music on the clear air, fragrant with the pungent sweetness of thyme and gorse. Below in the green valley, fringed with wooded hills, lies Petersfield with its beautiful pond among the trees on the Heath, and the long line of Hindhead ends the blue distance.

Petersfield was but an offshoot and chapelry of old Buriton, a village hidden away beyond War Down where Head Down sweeps into the valley. In the red brick manor by the church Edward Gibbon, the historian, passed much of his youth. The elder Gibbon was member for Petersfield; the son held a commission in the county Militia before he settled to his monumental literary labours. Buriton was also the home and in this case the birth place, of another Hampshire worthy, Robert Lowth, the great Hebrew scholar. Among other things he wrote *The Life of William of Wykeham.* His father was Rector of Buriton, and a writer of some repute.

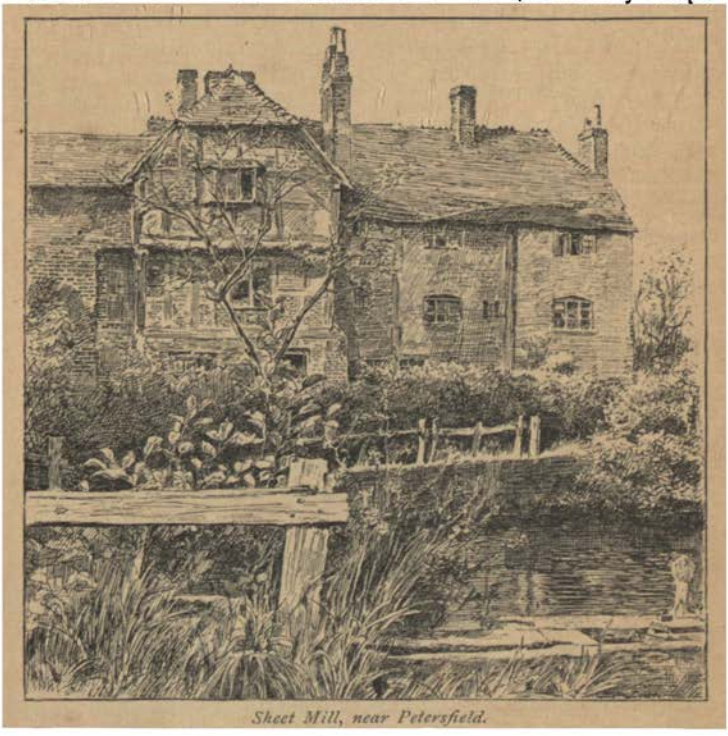
When Pepys journeyed to Portsmouth there was no fine highroad to follow, and the wild forest stretched for miles over the hills and vales. He mentions the need of a guide from "Gilford" to Petersfield, where on one occasion he and his friends "bated . . . in the room which the King lay in lately at his visiting there," and were very merry and played

bowls with their wives! On another journey he notes they had to get a countryman to guide them to Havant, "to avoid going through the Forest." They came hither down the road that runs by Rake and Liphook. Rake Common must have been such a place as the highwayman loved, and was the scene of at least one bloody deed, for in 1748 a customs officer and his companion were trapped by smugglers in an inn at Rowland's Castle, and carried off. One was whipped along the road till he fell dead, the survivor chained in a turf shed at Rake for three days, and then flung into a well. Months later one of the villains turned King's evidence, so his companion in guilt was hung on a gibbet by the scene of their crime. The Anchor at Liphook was a famous posting house in days of yore, and many an honoured guest has stopped by its great chestnut tree. Blücher and other memorable visitors came here on their way to the great Portsmouth gathering, and, among other Royal travellers, there are memories of the Duchess of Kent and her little daughter, who was to be Britain's best-loved Queen. In the good old times as many as twenty-six public conveyances would pass in the day. Very different though was it when Grantley Richards wrote of it in *Anecdotes of the Upper Ten Thousand* some forty years ago.

Petersfield has been "new" since William, Earl of Gloucester, and lord of the manor, granted the guild merchant of Petersfield, in 1108, the rights and liberties enjoyed by Winchester's citizens. The church was built in the twelfth century and has had as much restoration and alteration as the town, but retains its fine Norman chancel arch. There are some quaint corners as well as rows of modern houses hereabout, and old buildings such as the picturesque houses in The Spain, with tiny lattice-paned windows, and the old timber-framed dwellings off the market square, where Petersfield's Golden Horse, golden no longer but drab as the lead whereof it is made, prances ponderously on its pedestal in the centre of the market place. Surely it was a trickle from the Urns of Mirth inspired the bow on the fat beast's tail! The giver of the statue, William Joliffe, was member for the borough in 1724, and as enthusiastic an admirer of Dutch William as Macaulay himself.

The impression made on a stranger passing through the town is that Petersfield has always been preparing for a boom

that never has quite come about. Once the centre of the iron trade of the district—there were great smelting works before the forest disappeared—and with considerable trade in woollen goods, its commercial existence now is dependent on the market for corn and cattle. It is on the highway, and efforts to meet modern demands are visible, but many shops



Sheet Mill, near Petersfield.

are untenanted, and there is none of the bustle of success about the streets. However, the fine scenery will always attract even if the town never rises to more prominence than the great Petersfield case caused, famous among all the old quarrels about elective rights!

Nowhere are the Downs more irregular than by Petersfield, and the wildest jumble of wooded hillside, moorland, meadow,

river valley, and wind-swept common, lies between the Rother basin and the headwaters of the Wey. And here be it noted, lest the blood of any misguided cyclist be on my head, let none who wish to *explore* this country venture forth on a bicycle unless they be adepts at rough riding, have discovered an absolutely unpuncturable tyre, and have nerves and muscles to face any gradient that may suddenly present itself! After one hot and busy week the writer compared notes with a fellow cyclist, who had for the first time tested the use of his motor-cycle on manœuvres in this district, and our mutual decision was you could not ride down the hills because the surface was too rough, nor up for the steepness of the pitch, and there was just sufficient level ground between to rest and mend the punctures! Those who would hurry take the high roads, though it be at the price of extra miles, and even then on the Alresford road will come upon at least one hill requiring careful negotiation. To the lucky few, in these days when time is a luxury withheld from most of mankind, with leisure to enjoy the beauties of this corner of "such romantic confusion," a cycle is like to be more hindrance than help in the byways, "for the roads here be very sharp," as a country girl remarked.

There are remains of old work to be found in most of the renovated village churches. Steep, a mile to the north of Petersfield, has traces of Transition Norman, and there is some of the original Norman building left in the church at Froxfield on the high ground north of Langrish, where the Winchester road winds up, under the fine beech woods that hang on either side of this most beautiful pass from the valley to the uplands. Hidden in the hollows betwixt the hills beyond the Alresford road are the villages of Colemore and Priors Dean. Colemore—pronunciation varies from "Comer" to "Coalmaw"—can be reached without much difficulty by pretty, if flinty, lanes. One turns off the roadway by the White Horse Inn, a quaint, lonely little place hidden among trees in quite a unique situation for an inn, as it stands back in the meadows, but despite seeming isolation it is said to do a good trade. Country folk will tell you Colemore Church, a small Transition Norman and Early English building, is "very ancient." It has a Norman font and an old oak screen. Priors Dean is so concealed one seems to be coming to the end of all things

when suddenly the brown-tiled grey church, with its wooden bell turret and old porch, is found by the roadway opposite the old manor farm and one cottage, which is all of a village to be seen! There is something at once peaceful and pathetic about the solitariness and simplicity of the little Norman and Early English church, that stands in its grassy plot by the few tombstones and many mounds of forgotten dead, unrecorded except in that Book which has never an error. Within, a neighbour told me, are "many images"—the monuments to dead and gone Tichbornes and Comptons! Without there is only a huge decaying yew, loaded with birds' nests, and not a sound but the drone of the bees in the chancel roof, and the monotonous cry of ring-doves in the boxwood-hedge beyond.

The lane, with a hopelessly bad surface, runs toilfully up by Hawkley Hanger, and then, with a sudden twist between high banks, shoots down, past a succession of wooded hollows each more surprisingly beautiful than the last, to where the red roofs of Hawkley village crown a green rise in the most beautiful of secluded valleys. No further comment on the roads is needed than the remark of a Hawkley man, "There be folk in this village as don't even know of Colemore!" The elders who have lived "a long age" in the village, and can remember when "round frocks" were the general wear instead of rare exception, grieve over the dying out of old ways and fashions, and comment very disparagingly on the modern spirit. Why the cricket ground "used to be like a fair" for a match; the houses would be all shut up and everyone down there to watch; but now, though they had a fine new ground there was no such enthusiasm. "Seems as if when things was made easier there was less pleasure in doing of 'em"; sighed the rural philosopher. Once they could put three elevens in the field, but the young people "don't hold together so much nowadays." Even the ghosts in the locality seem "'bout played out now"!

But Hawkley to me appeared a very happy village, and my memories of it are among the pleasantest of days spent in exploring Hampshire's secret beauties—my hope is, before the flood of modernity and progress has swamped all its old charms, to have many another holiday to spend in the vicinity, to saunter by the deep valleys, climb up through the hangers for

views across the green hollows to the distant Surrey hills, and wander to Selborne, with White in hand, "all over the High Wood and Coney-croft hanger," hunt in the Long Lythe for the little lady's tresses, or under the beeches for the bird's-nest orchis. One well-remembered day my first specimen of the latter, with its spike of pale coffee-coloured blossoms,—the pollen is pale lemon-yellow—most delicate and uncommonly beautiful, was found in a hanger beyond Lower Faringdon, where the young beeches had been left to grow so thickly there was never a branch for twenty or thirty feet up their trunks, almost as slender and upright as pines, with even greater beauty. In the cool shade of a scented evening the feast of blossom and colour compelled one to loiter when the last sunbeams flickered through the thick green of graceful branches on to the silver-splashed bronze of the trunks, and checkered the ground below, where, from a bed of soft mosses, fragrant woodruff and the dainty trefoils of the wood-sorrel pushed their way through the brown litter of last year's bravery. The lane ran below up a gulley, and on the opposite slope a field of saint-foin showed rose-pink through the beeches. Into this peaceful scene obtruded with mighty hustle and fluster what never disturbed the old Nature-student's contemplations, a noisy engine with train of creaking orange carriages, just visible on the Meon Valley line beyond the hill slope! A moment, and it passed, and for noise the rooks had it all their own way again, to caw and scold as they wheeled in intricate flights. Such an insistive caw that evening—there must have been crime committed in the crow world to explain all the bobbery! For it was no triumphant, self-satisfied caw, as the chauckle of a contented rook should be, but plainly a note of recriminative abuse. "The evening proceedings and manœuvres of the rooks are curious and amusing" now, as when White watched them returning over Selborne Down to "the deep beechen woods of Tisted and Ropley," a century and more ago.

Faringdon itself is the prettiest of old villages, four miles as the crow flies from Hawkley, through more along the winding lanes that lead through Newton to the Alton road, by which the lower village lies. The old part, a quarter of a mile to the east, runs in a rough square, with a long elm-shaded pond, and irregular cottages, alike in nothing but their picturesqueness,

with herring-bone brick work, timber frames, thatch, flowery gardens and country charm. But, in the midst of this idyllic scene, arises a most appalling horror of scarlet brick and tile, towering above all. It reminded me of a suburban Palace of Varieties, and might have been shot down here by some scoffing genii to mock the old church over the way. It is another Hampshire "folly," and for some thirteen years has been in the building, a most mysterious proceeding it would seem, for only one bricklayer is allowed on the premises by the eccentric owner and deviser. It is a startling contrast to the old ivy-covered church, with the brown tiles of its roof sloping to within a few feet of the ground, up the untidy, yew-bordered walk.

For twenty-four years Gilbert White acted as curate at Faringdon, but the village with which his name will ever be connected lies behind the sweep of Bush Down :—

> "See Selborne spreads her boldest beauties round,
> The varied valley, and the mountain ground,
> Wildly majestic! . . .
> . . . . .
> Now climb the steep, drop now your eye below,
> Where round the blooming village orchards grow;
> There, like a picture, lies my lowly seat,
> A rural, shelter'd, unobserved retreat."[1]

To walk round Selborne with guide other than its revered son were heresy unthinkable, and if the old landmarks are passing, if strangers meet with discouragement at the gates through which so many Nature-lovers have passed, reason the more we should take his page in hand, and hie to the Hanger to see our Selborne thence, in glamour of light a century and more has not dimmed. Looking down through the trees from the seat, we shall not be a whit the worse though blue glass has been put into a window, or vandalisms perpetrated in the little village! If The Wakes has been purchased by an owner who prefers increased house space and a conservatory to the house as it stood when the old master-student left it,[2] if half-timbered cottages and heavy thatch are being ousted by red brick and tile, there are still

[1] White.—*Invitation to Selborne.*

[2] What was the Selborne Society about not to buy it and make a Natural History Museum there?

Selborne from the Hanger.

corners left as White knew them, and all the scenes he pictured have not vanished. If the Plestor has seen changes, it remains

a green space with shady tree and seat; the yew in the litten has but increased its girth; the beeches, "the most lovely of all forest trees," yet show a carpet of rustling bronze on the hillside below their green curtain of shade, loved by the bird's-nest orchis and sweet white helleborine—the violet helleborine is also to be found there. And if there are houses and roads on the county border that would puzzle friend Gilbert were he here to see, "the noble and extensive outline of the Downs" is not broken. It remains true that "the soils of this district are almost as various and diversified as the views and aspects," and that "the down, or sheep walk, is a pleasing park-like spot . . . commanding a very enjoyable view," and you may see below where "the village stands in a sheltered spot, secured by the Hanger from the strong westerly winds." To the east, "the parish still inclines down towards Wolmer Forest . . . a wet, sandy loam, remarkable for timber, and infamous for roads." The latter statement, if questioned by those who only know the excellent modern highway that runs from Farnham to Petersfield, none who have ploughed wearily through the heathy wastes, or waded along the sandy tracks by Bordon and Longmoor, will dispute for one instant! "Barren," and without a "standing tree," Woolmer is no longer, and if the Forest still "consists entirely of sand covered with heath and fern," it does not do so exclusively, and better deserves its title nowadays, for the firs have made the tract their own, and they flourish greedily; their sombre battalions are even more ubiquitous than the khaki-clad figures manœuvring over this "lonely domain" since, in one of the spasms of Army Reform that have racked successive ministers, Bordon and Longmoor Camps arose as tangible outcome to perpetuate a politician's nightmares!

Nor has man only wrought changes in the landscape, for the *Pond* is now almost as great a misnomer as was the *Forest* in White's time. Nature has waxed niggardly, the "hungry" water has all but vanished in the sand, "naked" no longer, but with parsimonious covering of grass and reeds, and sturdy heather tufts. When we passed it yesteryear, Mounted Infantry were parading in the shallow basin, and galloping across where the old naturalist watched "on the face of this expanse of waters . . . vast flocks of ducks, teals, and widgeons, of various denomination" in winter, and "picturesque groups of

cattle" sheltering from a summer plague of flies! But with return of winter storms and spring rain, the declivity fills again, a blue lakelet mirrors the sky once more, and vivid lines of emerald green spread up amongst the dry, brown heather.

The twin lakes by Oakhanger, about which White had "nothing particular to say," remain by the roadway, the third was drained many years ago. Were it not for two ugly brick cottages the upper pond, with its clump of trees on an irregular rush-grown island, would be entirely charming. With the sunset lights flushing over, fish rising with silver splashes through the blue ripples, and swallows and wagtails busy about the damp mud at the edge, it looked to me a peaceful and pleasant spot, riding from Empshott—the typical "Birkett Forster village"—to Alice Holt Forest, where the sun threw lengthening grey shadows over the roadway and the wind soughed gently through the pines. If Oakhanger village is uninteresting the Common is a delight—as what common is not, so long as it remains common? To the west runs the wooded ridge that cuts the drainage of the Oakhanger stream from that of the river Wey, and on the further slopes are the three villages of East and West Worldham, and Hartley Mauditt, whence a lane runs direct by the little church which has a Norman font and horse-shoe chancel arch.

One hot summer afternoon I wandered to East Worldham. A few cumulous clouds, thunderful, but exquisite, massed their cream and grey and snowy wonders above the deep blues and greens of the Alice Holt woods. Everywhere Nature's songs, heard and unheard but felt, told of the fulness of life, the joy of existence in this most beautiful world. It gleamed from the polished gold petals of the buttercups that joyously bestrewed the meadows and wayside; the birds declared it as only birds can; and the fluttering butterflies and scented south breeze, faint as a sigh from the wide-opened roses, danced together over the white roadway, to echo the music in the ribbon of shade beneath the hawthorns on the further side. Suddenly a tragic note broke on the summer idyll. Clang!—went the bell in the wood and tiled belfry on the hill top, and again, clang! Death's harsh tocsin jarred into the soft *Te Deum* of life. The village was in tune to the bell rather than the summer joyance of the surrounding country. The

villagers, all with some touch more or less of black in their dress, waited in groups. "For a woman of this village," a boy told me. Poor soul, she had died of consumption "in the Union 'orspital" at Alton, sent there by the doctors, "'oo could do nuffin," to gain sufficient strength for a journey to the seaside and a final snatch at life. Up the lane came a pathetic group of children with tear-stained faces, round a sad-eyed man. So that day the rebuilt church was left unvisited by me.

In some parts of the county the mourners gather at the church door the Sunday after a burial, enter in a body when all the congregation are assembled, sit in their places through the whole service, and walk out to weep round the grave again—a custom by no means confined to Hampshire. If a half-burnt coal, with an oblong cavity, flew from the fire, or the blade-bone of a shoulder of mutton had a dark spot in the centre, it was as sure a sign of death as the croak of a raven over the house. Of course the bees must be told of a death, salt must be placed by the coffin, and in some places it was considered very evil luck would ensue if all water in the house were not poured away, and the doors and windows flung wide open after the coffin was carried out. Some occult charm too lay in biscuits collected at funeral feasts, and Pepys tells of sage being sown on graves at Titchfield.

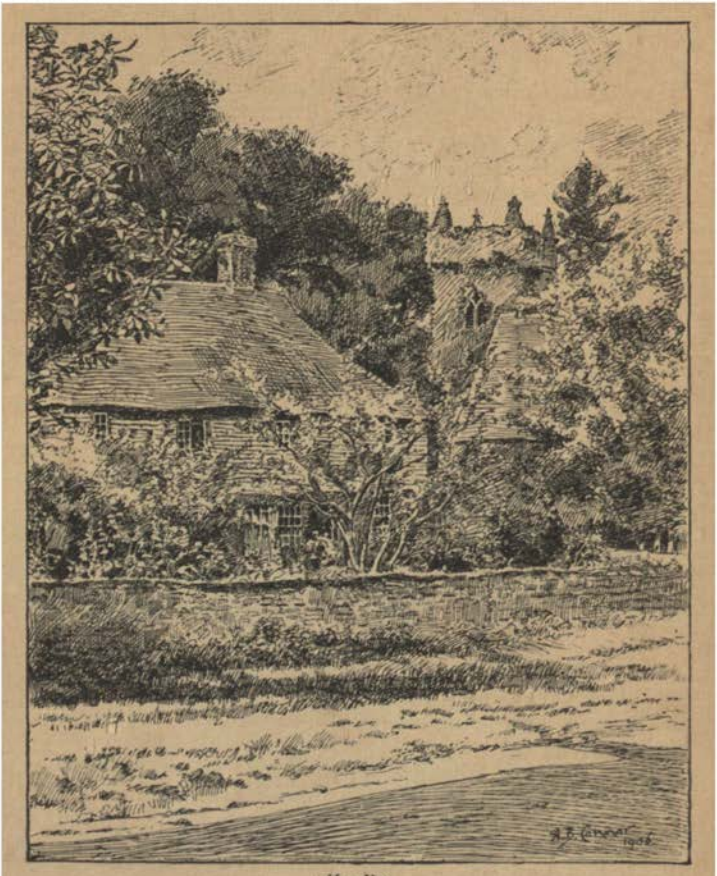
A road with most generous grassy verge on either hand leads east by Kingsley to the Farnham highroad, and on to Broxhead Common. The tumulus there offers fine vantage ground for a view. Eastwards is Surrey, but wooded ridges hide the wild wonders of Frensham, and Hindhead from here looks too insignificant to possess any view, much less one so perfect and far-reaching. Further south rises Hollywater Clump, unmistakable still, though the upspringing firwoods yearly diminish its old dominating character in the once treeless scene; they hide too, for the most part, the roofs of new houses, rows of shops and villas by the camps and along the road. Beyond again is the irregular line of Downs near Petersfield, and on to Sussex: whilst on the south-west the wooded hills, and white-scarred headlands with their grand beech hangers, overtop Hawkley and Selborne. Westwards the view is bleaker over Shortheath Common and pasture or arable lands, grey, green, red, brown, yellow, with the turn of the year. Northward are the trees of Alice Holt and Beacon Hill. Such is the varied

scene that rings the Common with its patches of burnt gorse and heather, rusty brown in sunshine, purple black in shade; and in summer when the ripe grasses bend in the breeze a rippling silver stream, shot with the Indian red of sorrel, floods the grassy spaces. But how different must it all have been when the little round-headed men below this short turf knew it in the long ago! Wild forests rolled over valley and upland, a tangled fastness that defied subjection even by Roman legions. Right well we know what the ancestral Briton's verdict would be could we hail him from the Bye-gone to these scenes of his past exploits—"We managed things better in our day"—that is humanity in all centuries the wide world over.

Bramshott Manor.

After all, if there were not some measure of blind contentment granted man the world would be unfit to live in. True it is the unsatisfied souls who rise and seek other ways for succeeding generations to follow, dimly groping for a knowledge visioned in wakeful dreams but elusive as ever will-o'-the-wisp, despite the triumphs of science, or grasped at but to find the seeming goal was only entrance gate to unthought spaces. Which is Human Progress. Thus we come back to the road, realising "We are very little changed" after all, though the thickets have vanished, and "we run men down to-day" with the last thing in quick-firers and magazine rifles, instead of the roughly chipped flints! So the country has changed with us, as much and as

little, and the Destroying Angel yclept Utility has seared its face with lines of road and rail, and set firs in orderly plantations, as new almost as the blatantly red brick villas, and deadly ugly



Headley.

lines of iron roof in all the artistic hopelessness of military and economic precision—there is nothing to give cause to the sapper to relinquish the hideous monotony of his sealed pattern ideas

of building in favour of an architectural equivalent for skirmishing order—would there were! The huts have no advantages, they are neither cheap nor beautiful, but red brick modern villas have one, from both the builders' and the artistic point of view—they are not built to last! That is the saving clause which may exempt us from damnation by a generation to come with better taste than the present. It is well to assume the virtue of optimism an we possess it not!

You get away from the heaths for a space—but not the ubiquitous villa—if you cross the stream in the valley below and pass into the green lanes that lead to Headley and Bramshott, and so to the corner where Hants, Surrey, and Sussex meet. Then, to have your fill of change and variety, wander on up the Surrey border over Greyshot Down, with Hindhead's heathery heights rising to the east, and by deep lanes and sandy tracks through pine woods out on to the wild purple heath where Frensham Pond touches the boundary of the county.

CHAPTER XXIII

ALTON

A Memoriall

For this Renowned Martialist Richard Boles of y^e
Right Worſhipfull Family of the Bolſes in
Linckhorne Sheire, Colonell of a Ridgment of foot
of 1300, *Who for his Gratious king Charles ye First*
did Wounders att the Battell of Edge Hill. his laſt
Action, to omitt all Others was at Alton in this
County of Soughthampton, was Sirprised by five or
ſix Thouſand of the Rebells which Cauſed him there
Quartered, to fly to the Church with neare Foureſcore
of his men who there Fought them ſix or ſeuen
Houers, and then the Rebell Breaking in upon him
he Slew with his Sword ſix or ſeuen of them and
then was Slayne himſelfe, with ſixty of his men aboute him

1641

His Gratious Soueraigne hearing of his death gaue
him his high Coñendation in ye pationate Expreſsian
Bring me a Moorning Scarffe, i haue Lost
one of the beſt Coñanders in this kingdome
Alton will tell you of that famous Fight
Which ye Man made & bade this World good Night
His Verteous Life fear'd not Mortalyty
His Body muſt, his Vertues cannot Die
Because his Bloud was there so Nobly spent
This is his Tombe that Church his Monument.
Ricardus Boles, Wiltoniensis in Art. Mag.
Compoſuit Poſuitque Dolens
An Dñi. 1089

Brass in Winchester Cathedral.[1]

"ALTON CHURCH interesting?"

"Oh! yes. They do say Oliver Cromwell preached there and was killed in the pulpit."

[1] A facsimile is on a pillar of the nave in Alton Church.

That was the information vouchsafed the writer by the wife of a neighbouring farmer. So much for local fame!

. . . . . .

Frost held all the land in iron grip at nightfall on the 12th December, in that year of the Rebellion 1643, when Sir William Waller lay at the Parliamentarian base, Farnham, busied with preparations to deliver a crushing blow, not by offering battle to the Royalist General, Hopton, then at Winchester, but by swift attack with overwhelming numbers on the scattered details of his force at Alresford, Alton, and Petersfield, before concentration were possible or reinforcements might arrive. All day Cavalier scouting parties had patrolled the Farnham road, and messengers had passed with ironic-friendly messages between the Royalist Crawford at Alton, whence he had retired at the end of November after raiding fifteen miles into Sussex, and the enemy's commandant. His lordship would have a runlet of sack and proffered a fat ox in exchange. The wine was sent, the ox promised at such time Crawford should in person deliver it, an unfortunate pleasantry as it proved, and indeed some misgivings at this prompt generosity on Waller's part crossed my Lord's mind, for not till Sir William's messengers had perforce drunk thereof was the sack consigned to safe keeping for his own future use. So darkness, and a watch set on the highroad running north-eastwards to where the enemy lay. But if Lord Crawford dallied with his sack Waller was in no temper to wait for his beef. While the Royalists at Oxford celebrated the death of their arch-enemy Pym with bonfires and rejoicing, silently in the gathering darkness Waller mustered his troops on the spacious greensward of Farnham Park, and, as silently, two hours after sundown, marched out along the road to Odiham. By nine of the clock he had 4,000 foot and 1,000 cavalry in the vicinity of Crondall. Here the accounts left us by eye-witnesses differ—one declares the force "returned to the left" after they had marched two miles, but judging by time and distance the alternative statement is correct, that they marched in the direction of Basing till an hour after midnight, and then wheeled round between the woods and hills towards Alton. However that may be, they made a wide detour to evade the Cavalier patrols, and the grey dawn of the winter's

morning found them on the hills above Alton to the west. The first alarm was given when a scout was captured. Crawford, with the enemy at hand from an unlooked-for quarter, was fain to admit himself out-generalled. He tarried not to measure wit nor sword with his adversary; egress to the east was barred by Haselrig and his "Lobsters," but the south was open, so hey! for Winchester and reinforcements, while hard at heel along the narrow lanes came the Puritan troopers, as the silent woods were waked by the advancing army, and "Truth and Victory!" echoed down through Alton vale. Then the squadrons returned to bar the way should the Royalist infantry likewise attempt escape. The colonel of the garrison, however, was of a fiery courage that needed no spur to action. Crawford was gone with his four or five hundred horse to warn Ralph Hopton, and bring relief to his beleaguered comrades; their duty lay plain—to hold out. Yet several hours at least must elapse before help could reach them, and defiance for even an hour seemed hopeless enough, for it must be remembered that Boles had no regiment of tried veterans; some there were indeed who had followed him victoriously at Edgehill, but the majority of his men were undisciplined recruits from wild Wales and wilder Ireland, fine stuff enough to fight with, but more than courage was needed with the odds at ten to one.[1] Some attempt had been made to throw up defensive earthworks to check advance into the town, but artillery fire drove the Royalists' musketeers from a house that commanded the road to north and north-west, and the enemy, having "hill and wind to friend," captured the western outworks by firing a thatched house to windward, and outflanking the defenders under cover of the smoke; they thus won their way to the market-place. Nothing daunted, Colonel Boles withdrew to the entrenched position on rising ground by the Parish Church. Alton had seen previous fighting—battles between Saxon and Dane, and skirmishes during the internecine struggle; not ten months previously a detachment of troopers had defended themselves against Prince Rupert's cavalry long enough to escape after nightfall, and only six weeks before Waller had there surprised a hundred Cavaliers under Colonel Bennet—but never a fight like this, that raged the while a winter morn passed on to noon.

[1] Clarendon gives five hundred as the total of Colonel Boles' force. The brass errs in more than spelling, notably in the date.

Adopting the enemy's tactics a loyal son of Alton sacrificed his homestead, and the flames and smoke, driven now in the face of the attacking force, aided the musketeers to hold their position. But numbers told. The concentrated fire of two regiments drove the defenders from the south-east corner of the churchyard wall. Instead of immediately barricading themselves within the church, Boles' men waited in the churchyard till the enemy discovered the way lay open and, rushing the gateway, drove them into the building. Brave they were, but discipline they had none, and, to complete the disaster, when the men in the trenches on the north discovered how matters were going and hurried to support their comrades no order was maintained, and the pikemen in the rear damaged more friends than foes. Then followed wild confusion. The enemy filled the churchyard, those Cavaliers who failed to reach the church fell beneath sword and halbert, or were knocked senseless with the butt of a musket; hand-grenades were thrown through the windows, bullets spit, split and splattered on the grey walls, and riddled the stout oak door. But the end could not be long delayed, the hinges gave, and the angry troopers fought their way through into the church where the Cavaliers piled their dead horses in the aisles for breastworks. "Charles!" "Charles!" rang the loyal battle-cry through the Norman arches under the belfry as man by man the defenders fell. "No surrender!" and the Colonel swore his sword should slay any who cried for mercy. But his men, untrained, borne back by sheer weight of numbers, gave way, dropped their weapons, and yielded. Boles, fighting to the last, was slain.

Foolhardy? Not so. There have been less effective sermons preached from that pulpit, I trow, many and many a Sunday. How often has a coward set his teeth, gone forward, and *won* when, had surrender been possible, he would have yielded—and lost! It is such deeds of undaunted valour that make surrender impossible until the dark hour when heroes like Colonel Richard Boles are forgotten.

There is, to my mind, no church in Hampshire with an atmosphere of its own more *sensible* than this of St. Lawrence, Alton. Not Romsey with its serene perfection, not the Cathedral with its impressive vastness, not St. Cross with old world surroundings and quaintly garbed brothers. Man's

passion and hate passed, utter peace holds the bullet-scarred fane. So on the dead hero be peace.

Gilbert White in his *Antiquities*[1] recounts another gallant deed connected with Alton, how, after de Montfort's defeat and death at Evesham, "that leading and accomplished malcontent in the Mountfort faction," one Adam Gurdon, Bailiff of Alton—the Sir Adam of Selborne—"kept up the war . . . entrenching himself in the woods of Hampshire, towards the town of Farnham," till Prince Edward defeated him in single combat, and by pardoning turned his enemy into a friend.

Those were the days when the wardens of Winchester Fair kept five mounted sergeants-at-arms to protect traders and travellers from the robber bands that infested the thick woods by which passed the London road, for though it would be hard now to find a stretch of country with more peaceful and pastoral air than the upper vale of the Wey, primeval forest covered the low hills even in the times of the Norman kings. So dangerous was the narrow track through the woodlands between Alton and Alresford, even in the days of Henry III, that he and other landowners agreed to grub up the bordering woods and make an open, broad and "royal road" for the safety of travellers and benefit of the country-side. Alton stands at the head of the Wey valley, and to the east of the road to Farnham and London that runs by the river some remnant of forest yet remains at Alice Holt. That a clearing existed through the western corner of the Anderida Forest by the pass of Alton even in early times the numerous Roman remains found in the vicinity testify, but from Alton to Farnham was a dangerous bit of road till the country was disafforested in mediæval days. This main road runs through the centre of the town and is Alton High Street till Normandy Hill is reached—the name may be a surviving memory of the day when Henry Beauclerc and Robert of Normandy signed the treaty of Alton in 1101.

The last few decades have wrought many changes in the old market town; landmarks of the past have vanished and new buildings have sprung up, such as the huge *empty* block[2] of buildings beyond the Butts built by the Absent-Minded Beggar Fund as a National Memorial Hospital. The

[1] Letter VIII.

[2] Since writing the buildings have been conveyed by Act of Parliament to Sir W. P. Treloar for his Crippled Children's Home and College.

Caige with its grated window and rough door has disappeared, though many remember the days when tramps and beggars, man, woman, or child, were shut in there at night by the local authorities, and can tell how charitable townsfolk passed milk and bread through the iron bars to feed the children, and perhaps lent a rug on a bitter winter night to some poor destitute, shivering on the straw charily scattered over the stone flags. The inns have changed in appearance since coaches ceased to rattle down Normandy Street if their names are still kept by the modern hotels, that cater now, as many a roadside notice announces, for motors instead of the once famous "Alton and Farnham Machine" with its "half price passengers" slung behind in a wicker basket. It was considered "truly a magnificent equipage; and it accomplished its journey in a marvellously short time, starting at six in the morning and arriving duly the same night"[1]—forty-seven miles!

There were square arched entrances to the inn yards in those days that have only been lately abolished, but despite much newness there are old bits to be found in the town, some venerable brick walls on the hill between the churchyard and market-place, and many a farmhouse in the neighbourhood has a sixteenth or seventeenth-century date on fire-back or beam. Before leaving the inns a notable Altonian of the last century should be mentioned, the cricketer James Burt, of the Duke's Head, an immensely big man, but despite his twenty-two stone he was playing cricket a few days before he died.

Alton has its "worthies," though they be not stars of the first magnitude. The Dominican friar William of Alton was "famous even amongst Forreiners for his sermons and sound judgement," according to Dr. Fuller, while of John Pitts the said good gossip tells that "son he was to Henry Pits and Elizabeth his wife," and thereby "sister's son to blackmouth'd Sanders." The Pitts were recusants. John, "Confessor to the Dutches of Cleve," though he studied chiefly abroad, was a Wykehamist and New College man. The Pinnock responsible for sundry guides whereby studious youth was once toilfully led into the thorny paths of learning, was also a native of the town, son of John and Sarah Pinnock, printers and stationers. Education of youth in grammar and other learning evidently

[1] *The Land We Live In*, vol. i. p. xviii.

was held of more importance in this agricultural centre than political affairs, for only once did the town trouble to send representatives to Parliament, though five times summoned to do so, but we have record of an educational foundation in the fifteenth century, endowed by "one John Chawnflower," thought to be probably the son of the "John Champflower, squyer," retained as counsel for Winchester College in 1405. "Chawmpflower's chauntrie" was succeeded by the Grammar School that John Eggar, a yeoman, founded in 1638. The old building still stands on the east side of the highway from Alton to Farnham beyond the seventeenth-century almshouses, and its richly toned bricks and stone mullioned windows are easily distinguished from the modern additions.

A century or so ago Alton was an important centre for the manufacture and sale of silk, serge, bombazine, and barragon, that "genteel corded stuff," and was famous for its ale and for its Quakers, in whose hands was much of the trade. The Society of Friends has not lost all its adherents in Alton, but the wool and silk works have given place to paper mills and breweries. Though modern building has linked up Anstey and Holybourne from neighbouring villages into outlying suburbs Alton remains essentially a country market town. A turn of the lane beyond the factories and mills by the river leads by pond and private grounds suddenly into the open country, and the roar of a furnace and whirr of machinery are hardly out of one's ears before the slow hum of innumerable bees and the shrill creak of the grasshopper is all the sound in the hop gardens where the young plants hang heavy with their aromatic burden of soft green catkins. The hop gardens hereabouts are increasing yearly and one hears no talk of depression or loss of trade as in Kent and Surrey. But this is not regarded as an unmixed blessing by some of the older-fashioned folk! One, indeed, whose family had lived for generations in the vicinage, animadverted sadly on present-day tendencies:—"Old families like the old fashions be dying out," the writer was told, and new-fangled methods of hop growing met with scant approval. "Maybe it's good for the hops, maybe no," said the sceptic, but there was no loophole of a "maybe" about the fact that increased cultivation necessitated the employment of "outliers," local labour being insufficient to cope with the work in the hop-picking season, and the behaviour of the said "outliers" was

"a treat." This was backed by an invitation to visit the village in September, that my comments might be sufficiently drastic, for "they carries on something chronic"! Knowing the genus hopper in Kent the invitation remains unaccepted. I would rather keep my memories of Hampshire lanes sweet and flowerful, with clumps of young fern breaking through the gold and silver patchwork celandines and anemones make amid the primrose carpets of the woods and coppices in early spring; scent-laden by the wealth of hawthorn, wild rose, honeysuckle, and clematis as summer suns tempt their frail beauty forth; or shaded by fruit-laden boughs before autumn gives place to winter. But we wander from Alton.

Roads and railways alike make Alton a good centre from which to visit the surrounding country. In the narrow triangle of land north of the valley of the Itchen, between the Meon Valley and the Alton to Winchester railways, are but three villages, East and West Tisted and Ropley. Once the back of the Downs above West Meon is crossed, the Gosport road runs north to Alton with a gradual drop of not much more than 200 feet in the eight miles, a line of country very different from the intricate tangle of hanger and hollow to the east. The land rises on either side, as a glance at a section of the Petersfield to Alresford route, which cuts this road to the north of Basing Park, will show. The Gosport road passes by East Tisted. West Tisted is perched in a lonely corner of the high ground that falls away by wooded slopes to Bramdean and the upper valley of the Itchen. It is a remote little place, and only to be reached by lanes leading no particularwise whither. Yet the tide of war swept over before and after Cheriton fight, and by the church, small and ancient—it certainly is not of later than twelfth-century work, and some claim to find Saxon traces in the rough old walls—stands an Elizabethan house that once was the home of Sir Benjamin Tichborne. That doughty cavalier lies in the church by others of his race, and though the years have wrought many changes in the pannelled rooms of the Manor, there remain some fine old overmantels of dark carved oak, twisting stairways—one leads to the priest's hole, which is now an ordinary room—and wonderful doors of sturdiest oak with wrought iron handles. What once was the chapel is now used as a sitting-room; an arch in the outside wall has been blocked up; the altar table and a huge and ancient fourpost bedstead

were sold by auction on the death of the last tenant, a farmer of the old school, who kept up many time-honoured fashions till his dying day. The household and farm hands assembled daily in the big hall for meals, and the two long, solid oak tables, that were set end to middle like a ⊢ down its length, yet remain; the family sat above the large salt cellar, and the servants below. In the evenings and on Sunday afternoons the men and boys played cricket in the field behind, and when the last bell rang for evensong, or the meal was ready, stumps were drawn, be the game in ever so critical a stage, for woe betide the unpunctual!

Sir Benjamin Tichborne's House, West Tisted.

Sir Benjamin, after Cheriton fight, sought refuge in an oak tree by the Manor there *is* a stump there now—but before that war's alarms had touched even this out-of-the-way spot, as Waller, two months after Alton fight, recognised the value of the situation for an outpost, and quartered some of his cavalry there. A long entry in the old register recounts a tragedy that then occurred within these walls. The faded ink, rusty with age, sets forth how:

A soldier, one Leiftenant Vernon, under a gentleman, one Captayne Gibbon, of a Kentish regiment of Horse for the Parliament against the King, in the tyme of ye Civill Warre betweene King Charles and his Parliament, being quartered at Sir Benjamin Tichborne's house, was buried in the charnell of West Tisted, on the north side, directly under the little

window. He was unfortunately killed by his Captayne's Groome of his horse in the kitchen standing by the fire on the Monday before, being February the 10th, being about 9 of the clock at night. Shott into his left shoulder through the bare bone, with a pistoll charged with two bulletts. The Captayne's man that did it was tried by a Councell of Warre as a thing of infortune, and not of set purpose maliciously. The Colonell of the Kentish regiment was one Colonel Lacy, Feb. 12th, 1644. A memorable Accident!

The oldest parish register is one of the most ancient in the county; the Act that ordained records should be kept bears date 1537-8, and the first marriage entered here, that of John Paxton and Alis Becher, was on "Feb. 9th, A.D. 1538." Four years later, among the burials, in quaint, crabbed writing, is note of some undiscovered tragedy: "A stranger whomt we did not knowe nor whome he was being killed by heerds." In the churchyard, not far from the fine old yew, beloved of jays, a withered oak stretches skeleton arms over the grave of a dead and gone vicar, who, in days when the branches were not bare, had expressed a wish to be buried under its shade. A year or so ago orders were given to remove the old tree as somewhat unsightly, but the villagers had not forgotten the dead vicar's wish, and not a man of them would lay axe to that tree. So it remains, a not unfitting if uncommon monument above his resting-place.

East Tisted is rather a model village in its way, and the people are not as uncouth as some to be met with in rougher, more isolated villages, nor is the reason far to seek. A squire who values his country property simply for the sport it can be made to afford, and cares naught for the tilling of the soil, or the condition of his tenants, will neither get nor keep model families on his estates. Ruins may tend to picturesqueness, but life in a hovel with dilapidated roof hardly makes for thrifty content. If a sound roof be the criterion therefor it must be a very solid virtue in the easternmost Tisted!

Here again there are very early registers: the old, stained parchments, with queer, cramped writings, also date back to 1538 for marriages, the baptisms and burials commencing twenty-three years later.

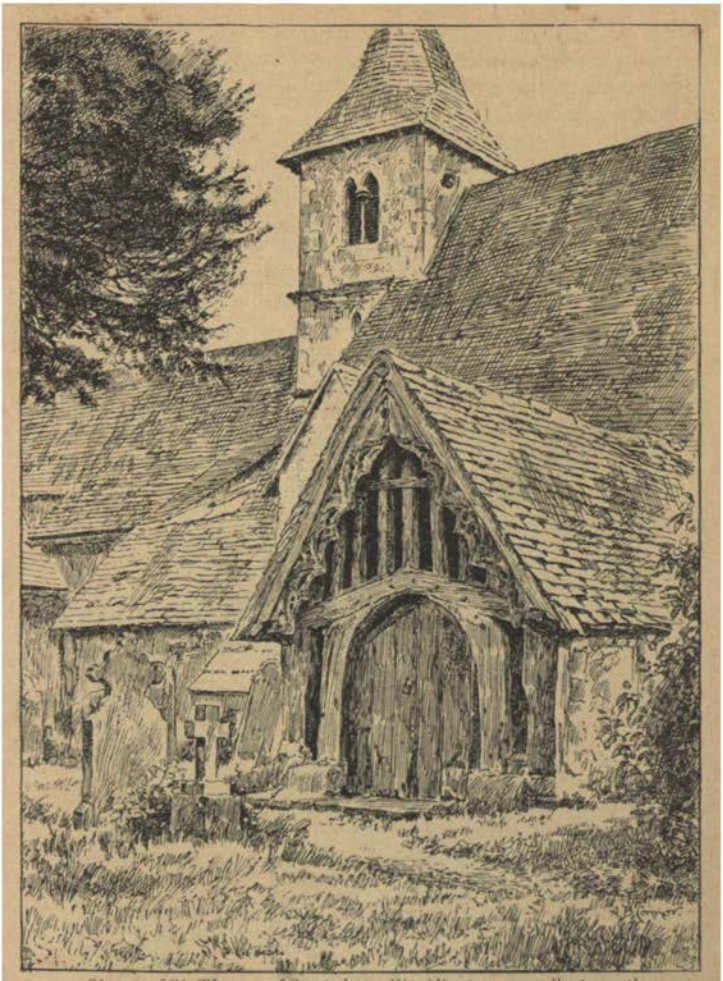
Nothing remains of the old church where Pastor James Rowlandson, in the days of dour Jamie, thundered forth his discourse on "God's Blessing on Blasting, and His Mercy in

Mildew,"[1] a sermon that by its name should rank with "More Sulphur for Basing"! But the modern building holds some interesting monuments of the Nortons, once owners of Rotherfield Park as aforementioned.

Ropley, easily reached from either of the Tisteds, is a big village that straggles between the highways from Alresford to Alton and Petersfield, at their junction a mile or so east of Bishop's Sutton. The older houses cluster up narrow, hilly streets by the much restored church, which has a bleak appearance; the grey of its tiles and square tower is not the grey of age with a multitude of half tones, but of colourless neutrality—a matter of indifference to the feathered fowl, to judge from the number of nests in the open woodwork of the belfry! The kennels by the road from Petersfield—they proclaim themselves to more than one sense!—mark Ropley as the headquarters of the H. H.

At Ropley we once more touch the Pilgrims' Way, this time at a disputed point, for some writers would take the old pilgrims directly over Four Marks Hill to Alton, whilst others favour a detour round to East Tisted. In support of the latter theory they claim local tradition and the existence of a Pilgrims' Place between Tisted and Lower Faringdon. But pilgrims came from all parts. The dedications of the Parish Churches of Portsmouth and Warblington argue the cult of the Canterbury martyr in that neighbourhood, the Meon valley villages doubtless added their quota, these pilgrims would hardly divert round to Winchester, but would follow the valley road to join the Way at Alton. There seems little reason, then, to misdoubt traditions at Tisted, an they still exist, or to wander round in search of explanation why a Pilgrims' Place is off the Winchester highway. The main stream of pilgrims from Winchester, however, would be far more likely to follow the old lane that still runs parallel for some distance with the London road and leads straight over the hill, a road which some authorities consider to be of Roman origin; and tradition may be quoted for this route also, for if the line be carried on it would run by the strip of land to the west of the railway known in old days as the Scarthe, and said locally to be a portion of the Way, which it could hardly be for pilgrims coming through East Tisted.

[1] It was published in 4to, 1623.



Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Warblington, near Portsmouth.

If there is a nearly three mile pull up the hill between Ropley and Chawton, there is a compensatory three miles down on the other side in whichever direction the voyager is

bound ; and, what is more, the road is excellent and the views well worth the climb. On the Alton side the first mile or so down runs by wood and hedge, in themselves a delight ; the parallel line of the railway is hid in a deep cutting, and beyond lies Chawton Park Wood ; to the east, between the road and a plantation of young larch, is a grassy strip below spreading beeches, thick clumps of hazel, and old thorn trees ; a green tunnel of a path is hid betwixt the larches and the rough screen of hazel, beech, and hawthorn ; wild roses and honeysuckle wind their long trails on the hedgerow and undergrowth, and clematis flings greedy tendrils to clutch at every bough. Through the scented air and chequered shadow, which lengthens and spreads as the lights of the westerning sun shoot slantwise between the tree trunks to bronze the bracken and make red columns of splendour on the pines, the broad road curves down till, passing under the Meon Valley line, it joins the Gosport road at Chawton. That wooded hillside is one of the most charming bits on all the road from Winchester to London.

By the corner where the highways meet, with low lintelled door that opens on the road, stands a square, unpretentious house, in part the village club, in part workmen's dwellings. A hundred years ago its roof sheltered the hand which limned portraits in prose of homely English life reckoned among our classics. We have met the writer before, for this cottage at Chawton was one of Jane Austen's Hampshire homes. Here she revised her masterpieces *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice* ; within these walls the bright and gentle lady penned the tales of *Emma* and *Persuasion*, with pocket handkerchief ever ready at hand to hide the page, as befitted feminine modesty, should visitors disturb her at her task ; and here commenced the illness that all too soon cut short her brilliant work and led to the last journey down the white road to Winchester from whence she should never return.

Chawton, or Celtone, another of the spoils of Hugh de Port, had been held by Oda de Wincestre before the coming of the Normans. Evidence is rather black against this Saxon thegn, for unlike most of his fellows the Conquest did not leave him beggared, and Domesday Book shows him possessed of five manors which had other owners under the Saxon kings ! The fine house standing above the grassy lawn is Elizabethan, but the church, which lies off the drive between the lawn and the

roadway, was almost entirely rebuilt after a fire in 1871. Its pinnacled tower rises from among the fine trees of the park, conspicuously different from the usual type of old Hampshire square, grey and solid towers, and, at a distance, is not unpleasing. The body of the building is delightfully smothered in ivy, and out of an old bit of wall by the north side of the chancel grows an immense bush of wallflower; its long stems, thicker than a substantial thumb at the root, resemble the contorted rubber stalks of artificial flowers most curiously. The Knights of Chawton were connections of the Austens, and Jane's second brother succeeded to the property on the death of

Chawton House.

his cousin, who, having no children of his own, had adopted young Austen as his heir.

Between Alton and the Candover valley lies a portion of that central country possessing no startling features if much of quiet interest, each village gathered round the church, its cottages, farms, and one or two big houses, an independent little community still, though in these days of steam and mechanisms no longer isolated. The three railways that join at Alton have brought a new feature into the country; here and there by Ropley groups of so-called bungalows intrude themselves on the notice of the passer by, and from Alton to Medstead by Beech, once a charming lane between Bushy Leaze Wood and Theddon Grange, more bungalows—from a corrugated iron shanty to pretentious villa they are all bungalows, the name, like Charity, covers a multi-

tude of sins! Again from Medstead, where the road runs up Dry Hill, is a small tin town that might have been a section picked up in the Wild West and dropped here by the roadway. The country folk had tales to tell about these undesirable novelties—tales it were not altogether well to repeat.

Wandering round Medstead one day in early summer the writer stopped by a gate to watch the cloud shadows gather and melt over the distant panorama of vale and hill beyond a rough ploughed field where landrails were calling each to other in the furrows. An old grandam, with starched sunbonnet framing her wrinkled countenance, came up and gazed silently beside me for a time, then ventured a comment on the weather —did ever Briton meet Briton without that introductory remark? Then the toil-worn hand pointed shakily to the blue line of hills to the South, that was Old Winchester Hill. I thanked her, with a word of praise for the beauty of the scene. "It's very nice for them as likes it, but most of 'em don't take no interest in it." My sketch-book reassured her, and the quavering voice continued disjointedly to explain that the country was not what it once was, and, bit by bit, during a long summer noon, landmarks were pointed out, old features, long vanished, recalled from the dim past, and the scene pictured for me of that hillside sixty years ago, when instead of tottering steps the blithe feet of a bride came up the flower-bordered walk of her thatched cottage home; common stretched away to the village where now lay ploughed fields, but folk came—she did not call them squatters—"and fust one took in one bit and then another," and after a time this one would change for one reason and others left because of something else; some prospered, but for the most there were quarrels, poverty and sickness, shanties but half built, garden plots neglected and weed grown, or dug up and never planted; in all a sad state instead of the grassy common and yellow furze bushes—"So the farmer 'e took it all in and put the fence," the hedge by which we stood. She might have been recounting the story of the first settlers in the forest clearing, but it was a page of a living creature's life, and the same tale was in the telling, set more crudely, in the settlements by the roadways. She shook her head sadly and returned to her seat at the cottage door, and I passed on to the old church; there was Norman work to be seen—and bungalows to forget! Fate can be ironic even

on a sunny June day—buckets, boards, and ladders lay within and around the building, and a coat of whitewash the most bigoted iconoclast must have approved was not yet dry on the renovated walls, "enlarged and restored 1853," as set forth by a winking brass tablet, "so the House of the Lord was perfected."

Winding lanes lead away to the west over the open downlands toward the Candovers through Bradley and Wield, a village of "faithful Fidos"! Such a rattling of chains was there, and outburst of growling and yapping protest at the advent of a stranger! Dogs are my friends, but if the canine inhabitants of Wield are as ferocious as they made pretence of being, well—I am glad chains are there fashionable. It is a pretty village, with small Norman church, "very ancient," a village maiden told me, then tentatively—the inquiring stranger might laugh, you see—"they do say it's as much as two hundred years old." Certainly the old flint walls deserved the title "ancient," and *outside* there was nothing to detract from the charm of the grey building, with green mossy coat on its red-brown tiles in the shady north side and vivid orange patches where the sun beat on it. The cottages stand about in gardens gay and fragrant with summer flowers, trailing creepers and climbing roses; they have mostly weather-beaten chimneys, rich toned tiles or thatch, the old mouse-grey the new soft yellow. On a grassy space by the roadway a man and a woman were busily engaged in what is really an industry of some importance in agricultural Hants—hurdle-making. A stack of finished wattle hurdles lay piled on one side, on the other the rough materials, hazel and ash rods and stakes. The woman split and trimmed them with a rough knife, and handed them silently to her fellow worker, who bent and twisted the withes round the uprights, and wove them in and out with strong, practised fingers. They were quite willing to show how to do this basket-making on a large scale, but untrained fingers made a sad botch of it! It was a hard life, a hurdler's, they said, and of course barbed wire and other modern inventions were spoiling the trade, but still wattle hurdles held their own for many purposes and, with luck, a man might make a fair day's wage at the job.[1]

[1] Hurdles hereabouts fetch seven or eight shillings the dozen—five was the price an old woodman at Laverstoke told me—and a man can make a dozen a day.

Bentworth, on the road from Wield to Alton and some two miles north of Medstead, deserves a visit for its own charms as well as its associations. Tradition whispers of a monastery, but history wots not of it, though the manor belonged for a time to an alien priory, for Henry I gave it to Rouen, and parts of the old Hall Place, or Steward's House, where the foreign archbishop once stayed, can be traced yet in the walls of the Manor Farm. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries a blind man held the living, so very zealous an opponent of papal rule that, notwithstanding the official reformation then in progress, his practical demonstrations of Protestantism involved him in troubles with his bishop that the influence of Thomas Cromwell himself could not avert. Palmes lost his rectory and his Rural Deanery of Alton, and the deposed Abbot Stevens had the loss of his Abbey of Beaulieu in some measure compensated for by the gift of the Bentworth living. Stevens and his supporters proceeded to take possession, *vice* Palmes, ejected. "They entered the parsonage with violence, sealed the barn doors, and hired men to jangle and ring the bells, above all measure and custom of charitable induction," complained the ex-rector to his friend the Chancellor. Palmes, if blind, could use his pen, though it seems to little purpose. The pen brought more material benefit to another of Bentworth's exponents of sturdy Protestantism, though in the end his *Scourge*, "a poetical flagellation of evil-doers," landed Wither in a—

> ". . . chamber of Neglect
> Walled about with Disrespect."[1]

In the Commonwealth days his political writings and satires had brought the Puritan poet and soldier prosperity that vanished at the Restoration; but though, as he wrote—

> "The very name of Wither shows decay,"

and we may no longer read his *Collection of Emblems* "both moral and divine" which, as he quaintly puts it, are "disposed into lotteries, that instruction and good counsel may be farthered by an honest and pleasing recreation," and the multitude leave the works of this erratic genius for the most part mouldering in forgotten corners of old libraries, or own a modern edition but to complete a series, the boast of his self-

[1] Wither, *On Poesy*.

deceiving lover will be quoted by every would-be philosopher till the drab old world has lost one more charm and no lover is left to echo—

"What care I how faire shee be?"

So Wither, had he never penned another line than that tuneful song, might claim a niche in the temple of England's sweet singers. His father had property here, but George, ready enough when "somewhat discontent" with London ways and doings to return "to our Bentworth beechy shadows," scorning "mere country business"—

. . . "soon forsook again
The shady grove and sweet delightful plain."[1]

Wither must also be reckoned among Hampshire's hymn-writers, for he wrote the *libretto* of *Hymns and Prayers of the Church*, which was published in 1623 with music by Orlando Gibbons.

Bentworth churchyard, with its lime trees and ivy-grown tombstones, is a beautiful, peaceful spot; the bees drone an endless anthem under the honey-sweet blossoms—of course there are bees in the roof by the square tower with its shingled bell-turret. Inside the cool old building, with low pointed arches, stumpy pillars and high-pitched roof, though restored, is much as it was when the blind rector preached his last sermon, with lancet windows and the priest's door in the Early English chancel, and the Transitional nave; but the old font was not then under its oak pyramid of early Jacobean carving, and the tower where the bells "jangled" so tumultuously at his successor's riotous induction has been rebuilt.

A turn to the left after leaving the village gives a glimpse towards Lasham and Shalden on the hill beyond and an excellent run down the whole way back to Alton by the finely timbered grounds of Bentworth Lodge to the valley where the highroad and light railway run to Basingstoke, with wooded ridge above the line, and the trees of Theddon Copse shading the roadway, a delightful entry to Alton.

[1] Wither, *Abuses Stript and Whipt.*

CHAPTER XXIV

QUIET CORNERS

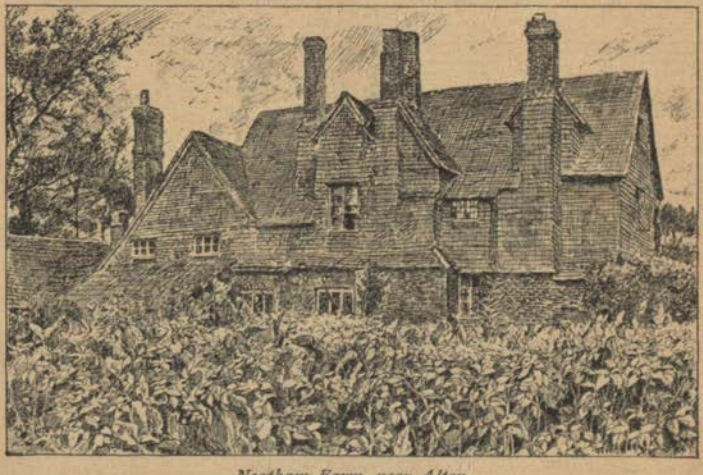
"What novelty is worth the sweet monotony where everything is known, and *loved* because it is known?"—GEORGE ELIOT. *Romola.*

A COUPLE of miles to the north of Alton Holybourne offers choice of lodgment to the wayfarer, and a lane beyond the much restored church, by the once-noted Holy Spring, leads to the highlands whence Waller's troops descended that eventful winter morning in 1643. The view is worth the climb on a day of shifting light and shade, on which Hampshire scenery so often depends to enhance its beauty. One evening I can recall a subtle feast of colour and cloud effect watched from the hill running round to Holybourne Down. At starting the rain, that had threatened all day, broke and washed out the distances; a film of silvery grey hid Hindhead, filched the colour from clover fields, and silenced the birds; only the yellow cress and mustard flowers among the young green crops showed an unflinching bravery of hue. Then the veil lifted. Hórsedown, Beacon Hill, and finally Surrey's Crooksbury stood out, their crowns seeming to part the low, scudding storm-drifts; the reds and browns of houses below in Holybourne and Alton showed amid the trees of the valley, beyond a ploughed field that made a brown patch on the hill slope, adjoining a grass meadow dusted with the mustard's pale gold. The grey of the sky intensified the pink of the June roses, as they swayed with their crystal burden of raindrops, shaking down fairy rainbows when an evening breeze rent the dull pall overhead. The ragged clouds piled layer upon layer in the east, leaving a majestic range of aërial

snow mountains to the north for the sun, incomparable artist, to transform with magic touches, and change rapid as a kaleidoscope, from cream and grey to pink and purple. The Surrey hills under the dark curtain at first were faintly blue, then violet, and nearer ridges rich green; whilst ever and anon a ploughed field, caught by the slanting sunbeams, flashed out pale orange, and Horsedown's wooded common as the changing lights played upon it was one moment but a shade darker grey than the riven clouds above it, the next a deep indigo shadow below white cloud-cliffs. Then the light touched the houses on the Surrey border, and turned their modern ugliness into fairy palaces of glowing copper. Alton meanwhile lay in shade, but as the sun sank through a rift in the ragged clouds on the horizon the lights played over walls, roofs and guardian church, almost glorifying the factory chimneys and buildings, and till the snowy cloud mountains rolled up and overhead, as angry and tattered as their grey predecessors, the town lay like a jewel in an enamel setting, a mosaic of green, grey, brown, and gold.

George Eliot's words in *Romola* fit these quiet corners of Hampshire, where the downlands melt into the heaths and commons of the London Basin, as though penned amid their quiet homeliness; but "monotony" is hardly the word, for lanes and hedgerows repeat nothing but charm, and each village is distinctive. The London road, when Alton is left, runs along the river valley by Bentley to Farnham, with good surface if no striking views. Lanes in plenty open off to lure one to wander round by villages that have slept contentedly on through the passing of centuries. Neatham, on the further bank of the Wey, had a market before the Conqueror came, and in a field by the pretty lane may be found traces of a ruined chapel, that once belonged to the great Cistercian Abbey at Waverley—just beyond the borders of our county—hence possibly the name of the wood conspicuous to the east of the highway above Neatham Down, round which lanes wind in delightful fashion, but tantalising, for the legend, *Trespassers will be prosecuted*, meets the eye conspicuously in all directions. Monks Wood's chief claim to notice is that the pole-cat in Alton Museum was killed there, a beast rare enough in England to deserve mention in any part of the country, and almost, if not quite, extinct in the south.

Beyond, at Wyck, the views are charming, the curved hillside with its clump of trees and clustering undergrowth in the foreground on the west, and behind it the Downs, a patchwork of reddish-brown soil, green, yellow, and the deep verdure of woods; while to the east the eye may range to the blue distances and beech-clad hillsides that circle Petersfield. But a finer view is to be had from the neighbouring village of Binstead, on the high ridge of land that cuts the tributary rivulets of the Oakhanger Stream from the valley of the Wey. Looking eastwards, where the land falls to the massed greens



Neatham Farm, near Alton.

of Alice Holt Forest, on a spring day you get a wonderful effect of drifting cloud-shadows over the yellow-green of young oak shoots and the deep purple gloom of the pines. Beyond the woods the dark shoulder of Broxhead Common is deeper indigo still when the gorse is burnt in great black scars, and the heather awaits the summer sun to draw out its pink beauty. Nor should the view from the churchyard be missed, but the lane that passes round and winds down between high banks to Green Street and Kingsley Common is bad even among these unreliable lanes that tempt one astray from the sound surface of the highways hereabouts. It cost me a new

tyre on one occasion. Huge flints that lay loosely over the roadway looked as though the stone-breaker, tired of his task when half-way through the business, had kicked them angrily about and thrown up the job!

There is a fourteenth-century effigy in the Westcott Chapel of the Transition Norman church, and the low round pillars of the nave have heavy, curiously carved capitals. The inscriptions on the bells in the battlemented tower tell something of their story, as, for instance—

> "Doctor Nicholas gave five pound
> To help cast this peal tuneable and sound."

> "Samuel Knight made this ring
> In Binstead steeple for to ding."

Bentley Church, a quarter of a mile from the high road above that village, by a long and sombrely impressive avenue of yews, also dates to the days when late Norman work was blending into Early English; but the church at Froyle, just off the main road between Alton and Bentley, was almost rebuilt nearly a century ago, and all of old work left is in the east end of the chancel. The aisleless nave used to be filled with heavy and ugly box-pews, and the men's gallery blocked it up still further. The squire's pew was in another gallery, a sore matter for the vicar's wife, as the vicarage seats were down below, nor was the good lady content till a big pew was erected on iron supports near the pulpit, to which she ascended complacently every Sunday up the pulpit steps!

Though Froyle is old, it lacks all recorded history, and can only say with Topsy, "'Spects I growed"! A network of lanes, with varying surface, link it with other villages and hamlets. One delightful byway runs from Lower Froyle to Sutton Common, and branches back by the hillside to the Alton-Odiham road, which it joins by the Golden Pot, or with another turn swings up and down hill to the pretty village of Long Sutton, while a seductive tree-bordered lane leads to the thatched cottages and big elms of South Warnborough.

South Warnborough Church, up a chestnut avenue, has been much rebuilt, but retains its Norman doorway with very fine mouldings. The registers are old, and those who like to go key-hunting will find, when they get within, monuments to the Whyte family. The Dr. John White, Bishop of Lincoln,

appointed to the Winchester See after Gardiner's death in 1556, was, however, a native of Farnham. At Queen Elizabeth's accession White lost his bishopric for refusing to take the oath of supremacy, and in part for the sermon he preached on that event. Eccles. iv. 2, furnished his text, and the finale is well known. After weeping copiously, "*Melior est canis vivus leone mortus*," quoth he, "and I hope so shall reign well and prosperously over us; but I must still say with my text, *Laudari mortuos magis*

South Warnborough.

quam viventes; for certain it is *Maria optimam partem elegit*"! The ex-Bishop came to South Warnborough, and lived with his sister till he died, about a year later.

The steep rough road to the west leads past Hoddington House to Upton Grey. There are many delightful old houses in the scattered village on the hillside. The little church, picturesquely situated between two lanes that lead to Greywell, has some Norman and more Early English work. The hills are the outlying spurs of the Downs, here no longer wild and unfettered, but trimmed to gently undulating agricultural land. The dark lines of Herriard and Hackwood Park Woods show on the west, beyond the browns and greens of hay and corn-fields. The blue-green of wheat and rye shades to the yellower verdancy of barley, and contrasts with the pinks and crimsons of saint-foin and clover. Neither barley nor roots

are at their best on this land of chalk with clay subsoil. It is very open country, bleak and exposed in winter, and the water lies at a very deep level. But to the north the ground falls away to the water meadows of the White Water, and the breezy commons that alternate with wood and cultivated lands up to the county borders. Below the hill crest where Odiham Firs stand out, a good landmark, lies the little market town that gives the copse its name, and Greywell is in the valley to the west, just above the sedgy marshes through which the White Water gathers volume to start away on the business of reaching the Blackwater, and so with the Loddon to join Father Thames.

Odiham is a pleasant old place; its wide street, reminiscent of coaching days, is both clean and airy. But of all waterside villages, North Warnborough, half a mile downhill to the north-west, is one of the most delightful. It is a place of many streams. Water is everywhere: lazily filtering through cress beds; broadening into pools across the roadways; purling under the plank set athwart for a footbridge; narrowing with swifter flow between guiding banks, to sparkle out and be lost in marsh or meadow. The pretty cottages stand about in irregular fashion, by the roadside, in gardens, and above the streamlets. Many are built with overhanging upper stories, and in summer when the doors are set open, in honest country fashion, even a passing stranger can see at a glance the people are a home-loving folk, and may note the display of china and treasures on the dresser, and bright bits of chintz or patchwork within, gay as the flowers in the gardens. A wealth of wild flowers floods colour over the marshy spaces where, on hot June days, gentle-eyed Alderneys stand hock-deep in the streams, patiently whisking the teasing flies from their satin smooth coats. Here again the yellow iris raises its triangular flag, and the water forget-me-not clusters by the deep bronze shoots of young water mint. Above all in glory of colouring is the beautiful mimulus, displayed, not charily here and there a root—as we used to know it in a Gloucestershire valley, a rare treasure in our youthful days—nor as I have seen it by a Surrey stream in isolated patches, but revelling in great masses of succulent stem and sun-prisoning blossom on swamp and canal bank. The Basingstoke Canal, after passing through a tunnel under Greywell Hill, turns up to North Warnborough by Odiham Castle.

Only the shell of the two-storied fourteenth-century keep remains, and the massive walls and huge buttresses make the surrounding pines look pinched and small in comparison, they have so solid an air. Bushes and seedling firs grow in crevices of the stonework, and give a ragged, unshaved appearance to the hoary walls; trails of wild roses sway over the grey flints that once sheltered high-born dames, gallant warriors, even dead and gone kings; and short-turfed mounds hide all else of the

Odiham Castle.

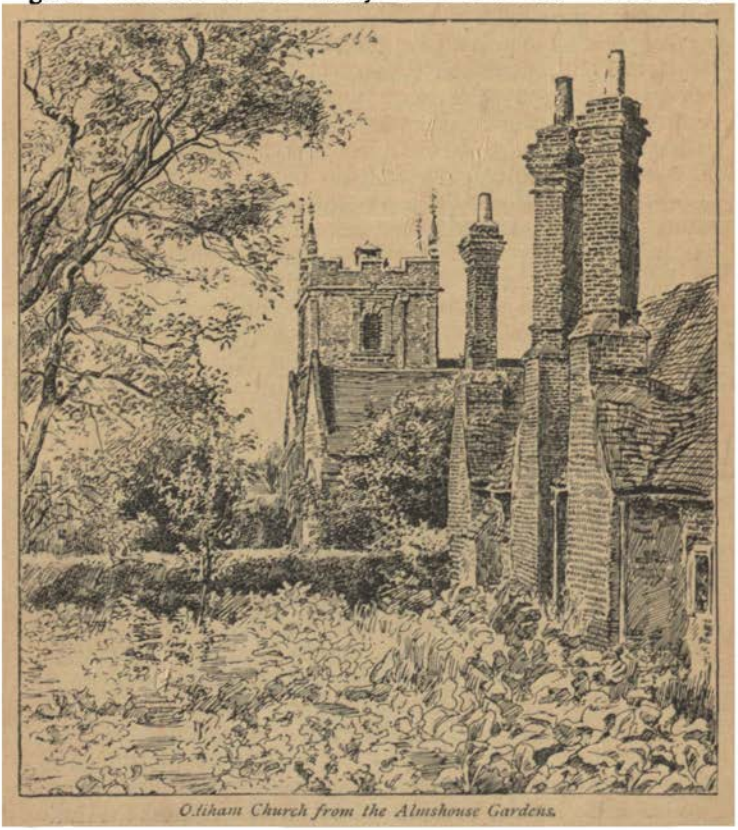
moated castle. What huge funnels those chimneys must have been before they were broken into mere gaping spaces in the wall! And certes they were needed, for there were days of much feasting in the old fortress, as well as days of defiance and strife. The castle, though it has no story of siege so protracted as that of Basing House, holds a record as gallant. Louis of France, when he came by invitation of the Barons to wrest the English kingdom from John's unworthy hand, after

he had taken Winchester, besieged Odiham Castle, and his army was defied for a week by the handful of men within—three knights, three esquires, and seven men at arms, instead of Basing's "six gentlemen armed with six muskets." In the end the garrison of 13 marched out with all the honours of war, applauded equally by friend and foe. Odiham was a Royal manor from Saxon times. When Palace Gate Farm was rebuilt, in 1901, the excavations disclosed the foundations of an octagonal stone tower, and there are still remains of an underground passage where once stood the palace of the Wessex kings. Henry I visited the Castle, and his son John came very frequently. On one occasion, in 1203, he gave the manor to the Odiham men, and from here it was he set out for the memorable meeting with his nobles at Runnymeade that resulted in a greater grant than the rights of a manor, safeguarding the rights and privileges of a nation. Thereafter, he returned to this Castle, certainly in the vilest of tempers—was he not ill with gout and rage? You may read in the old Chancellors' Rolls that the county and its two chief towns frequently paid money to that spendthrift king, "that they might be lovingly treated," which may somewhat explain his partiality for Hampshire! His daughter, Eleanor, was granted the manor on her first marriage. When widowed, she wed Simon de Montfort, so during the next civil strife Odiham was held against the King instead of for him. But before those disquiet times prosperous days were the lot of the Castle. When the Princess Eleanor and Earl Simon sojourned within the walls entertainments and lavish hospitality were the rule.

Then de Montfort fell at Evesham, and his Countess sought refuge at Porchester. Thenceforward the Castle declined, though it was the dower of three queens, and kept in repair when Elizabeth visited it. *David le Bruys rex Scotiæ*, the Castle annals record, was prisoned here after his defeat at Neville's Cross.

Odiham Church is a large airy building, ranging from the Early English to the Perpendicular styles, with seventeenth-century tower and woodwork in the pulpit and oak galleries. The original was built of oak and thatched with reeds. It stands by an open space, the Bury, set behind the houses of the main street, where the old stocks and whipping-post are carefully railed round and preserved. The round, fourteenth-century font is of

particular interest, as it shares with that at Youlgrave, in Derbyshire, the peculiarity of having a drain at the side. The list of rectors and vicars of Odiham *cum* Greywell, hanging near, gives some clue to the history of the churches. There were



Odiham Church from the Almshouse Gardens.

times of excitement in the days of the Rebellion, for Odiham lay midway between "Basting House" and the rebel headquarters at Farnham, and at least one fierce skirmish was fought in the vicinity. The church was the scene of outrage on another occasion. Roundheads from Farnham rode

into the building and drove out the vicar with pistols at his head. By accident, or mischievous design perchance, one soldier fired his piece, whereat a woman died of fright! The vicar's ailing wife was turned out of the parsonage, and it was no thanks to the Puritan troopers that her infant was not born in the street. Luckily for the poor lady, some neighbours had the courage to carry her in out of the snow. Apropos of babies, a brass in the church with the effigy of an infant depicts the fashions of swaddling clothes and bibs in 1636. It is in the vestry floor of the south choir aisle. There are some other fifteenth and sixteenth-century brasses.

Among its worthies Odiham counts the grammarian, William Lillie, first master of St. Paul's School. He "travelled in his youth as far as Jerusalem," and in 1522 "our Lillie died of the plague," Fuller notes. The Grammar School here was founded by one Robert May in 1694. Bishop Burgess, of Salisbury, was one of the issue of a romantic Odiham marriage, for a local grocer wooed a local heiress, and the couple eloped. Their sons all prospered; the eldest succeeded to his mother's property; the second bought an estate in the county; the Bishop was the youngest. Another wedding of some notoriety is recorded in the register of marriages for January 4, 1784, Charles Hambleton and Mary Seamol being the names of the pair. After the ceremony the fond bride discovered her "Charles" was like unto herself—a woman!

Beyond the canal, which loops round the north of the town, with its yellow water-lilies and slow-moving barges, lies Odiham Common, a straggling remnant of the old forests that gave the Saxon ham the distinguishing name of woody. Wood is "hood" in local parlance, and even from Hoodiham to Odiham is no great transition, but the "h" is probably a late corruption, for in the Test valley they talk of "'oodman" for woodman, and "'oods" for woods. One of Odiham's chief sights is the great chalk-pit that lies off the Alton highway. The white-walled semicircle encloses, they say, seven or more acres. It is locally credited with driving away thunderstorms, but failed lamentably to keep up its reputation when last I stayed in the little country town. By Alice Holt, an old farmer told me, pointing to the oaks above the bracken, that thunderstorms always came in that direction, for "there be iron in the oak what draws it to the hood," and so

explained Odiham's immunity. Most of the trees on the common are aged thorns, with gorse, bracken, and brambles matting round their knotted trunks. But thunderstorms were my fate at that time. Three several attempts to reach the vantage ground of Horsedown Common to view the land around were frustrated by storms, and the same ill-luck attended an expedition the following week from Crondall to Beacon Hill.

Crondall lies off the highway to Farnham. A "hazardous outpost" Colonel Birch thought it, when posted there before Waller's successful march on Alton. Crondall manor of old extended up to Yateley, a chapelry of the parish on the borders of Berks. Crondall Church is a veritable patchwork of a building, held together by its huge buttresses, that make the west end look like a racket court. The older portions are Transition Norman. The heavy old tower was pulled down in 1659 and the red-brick tower, that shows so picturesquely beyond the brick and flint path under the beautiful lime avenue, was built instead. Some sixty years ago extensive—and disastrous—restorations were carried out, and left an indelible mark more recent attempts to negative the mischief cannot entirely better. The old church chest—it was *repaired* in 1546—holds, besides a copy of Jewel's *Apology*, published in 1609, many interesting papers and accounts from 1543, with expenditures and notes concerning church ales, "king ale" and Whitsuntide banquets; Smoke-farthings, the annual tax on All Hallows—the church is dedicated to All Saints—Twelfthtide and Doling money. These accounts are of unusual interest in that they start before the Reformation, and so details of the methods whereby the great change was brought about in country churches can be gathered from them, as well as other curious and forgotten customs; for instance, the dog-whipper only ninety years ago drew a guinea a year for "beating dogs out of Church"! Though the earliest date on any of the five bells is 1616 there are entries for re-casting in the previous century. The peal might only be rung on May 29th, Guy Fawkes' Day, St. George's Day, Coronation Day, or other days of national thanksgiving. The brass on the wall of the Itchell pew is to "John Eager," founder, or father of the founder, of Eggar's School at Alton. It bears a skeleton and the quaint inscription :—

"yov earthly impes that here behold
this picture with your eyes,
remember the end of mortall men
and where their glory lies."

The Giffords owned Itchell Manor from 1264 till Elizabethan days. About 1680 most of the old house was pulled down and the present frontage erected. Itchell, or Ewshott, is a "haunted" house, plagued with a mysterious noise that no searching ever accounted for. According to one investigator, this is caused by the ghost of a former Squire, an "eccentric and dubious character," who returned here with an Italian servant after a lengthy absence. He was a great miser and reported a very ill-liver. "At last he died or disappeared," and ever since the noises have intermittently made night hideous. The explanation suggested is that the Italian had "*bricked up*" his master in the old house, and the ghostly sounds perpetuate the tortured victim's unavailing efforts to break a way out, or attract attention and rescue by battering the walls with his hunting crop.[1]

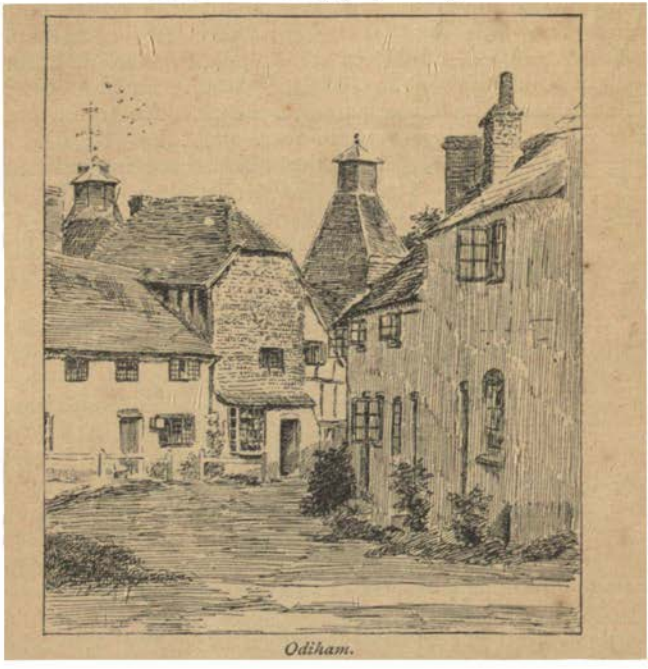
There is nothing ghostly about the surrounding country: wooded hills, winding lanes, cottage homes, farms and manor houses are the details of the restful scenes every mile discloses. Most of the churches are modern; Dogmersfield's old church was demolished in 1806, but at Winchfield, to the west of Dogmersfield Park, some very beautiful Norman work is left and an Early English chancel. The organ there is notable, for space in the little church is so limited great ingenuity was demanded to erect one at all.[2]

Space forbids to tell of the Roman camp at Barley Pound, the mosaic pavement at Tilefield, destroyed within thirty years of its finding in 1817, or of the treasure trove of rare gold Saxon and Merovingian coins stumbled on by two men when snipe shooting in Bourlay Bottom. Nor may we wander round and trace out the old Maulth Way. We must leave these pleasant byways and find the broad road that runs from Basingstoke out of the boundaries of our county, and so to the end of our wanders.

[1] *cf.* Major Edward Moor, *Bealing Bells.*

[2] "The instrument was bracketed on the west wall, the action (tubular pneumatic) being carried through the wall of the tower and back into the church, where it connects with the keyboards on a console on the floor of the nave. The bellows are placed in the tower." C. F. Abdy Williams, *op. cit.*

One Midsummer eve the writer passed by Dogmersfield from Crondall to Basingstoke. It had been a stifling day, hot with sultry thunder heat. The roads were heavy with dust, and the very cistus, sun-lover though it be, drooped delicate gold petals limply back; the roses opened, blanched, and dropped, almost while one watched them in passing. Then the sun sank in a bank of watery grey cloud, and over the tired



Odiham.

earth was that hush which comes before rain; the wind whispered of it in the tree-tops, the birds gossiped loudly, doubtless as interested in the meteorological outlook as the farmers straining every nerve to get the hay carted before night-fall. A "fire-bird," otherwise fly-catcher, darted from an oak tree and hung quivering in the air, intent on his supper above all things else. The white blossoms of the water buttercups on a wayside pond looked like fallen stars caught in the pool's

green mirror above the deep amber shadows. In Odiham the heat radiated up at one from the broad and dusty street, but there was relief in the gracious spaces and green copses of the Common, and at Warnborough with its mill stream, and murmur of much water through lush grass and clustering reeds. Then came Hook Common, where the trees make pools of shade even in the hottest glare, and as the sun set stormily, with an evanescent burst of yellow through the grey, presage of storm to come, we swung round on to the great highway to the south-west, that passes through Hook, with its old Raven Inn, and or ever the lights died out before swift coming twilight, we were speeding past the tiny Norman church at Nately Scures down the easy road to Basingstoke.

CHAPTER XXV

ARMA VIRUMQUE CANO

"Still on the breast of England, like a star,
The blood-red lonely heath blows, consecrated,
A brooding practice ground for blood-red war."
ALFRED NOYES.—*In Time of War.*

IT is not all war, this north-east corner. Deep lanes, where the hot spring sunshine draws out the heavy perfume of the hawthorn, run from the open commons, whence the breeze comes ever honey-sweet with gorse or heather. Many a winding stream threads under willows and alders, through marshy corners and rich meadows, and on the bleakest heath spread sheets of water such as Fleet Pond, where many water-fowl—from the ubiquitous coot to the rare, great crested grebe—find shelter in the sedges, despite the encroaching rows of modern villas that lengthen out from the military metropolis. Colour is never lacking. Even when the Joseph's coat that Autumn flings on the land is torn away by winter storms there remains the rich orange of a gravel pit to break the sweep of madder-brown heath, and some golden blossoms will be struggling bravely on a gorse bush under the gloomiest December sky. Then when drab days go you get all the vividness of contrast that the young leaves of birch and beech set among pines can give.

Of early work in the churches of this neighbourhood there is not very much that is noteworthy.[1] It is possible that

[1] There are traces of the Norman building at Elvetham; Yateley's Transition Norman has been restored; Newnham has a Norman chancel arch with dog-tooth moulding. Rotherwick Church is Early English; so is part of the parish church at Farnborough, with a modern Perpendicular south porch; and some timbers of the thirteenth-century building are still in the church at Hartley Wespall, which has a fine alabaster reredos. Sherfield Loddon has a restored Decorated church.

Bishop Waynflete may have had some share in building the Perpendicular church at Mattingley, just off the good and level Reading road that runs from Odiham over Bartley Heath to Heckfield and Risely Common, and so into Berkshire with the high road from Basingstoke. Westwards lies the estate of Stratfieldsaye, and in the extremely ugly church, rebuilt by Lord Rivers in 1784, are many monuments of the old owners, the D'Abridgecourts, to whom it came by marriage with the heiress of the De Sayes. In the fourteenth century a D'Abrichcourt married Queen Philippa's niece Elizabeth, daughter of William, Duke of Juliers. After the death of her first husband John Plantagenet, Earl of Kent, the lady had donned the veil, but the cloister failed to hold her attention and she found in this second marriage better cure for her afflicted state, though to wed a nun was no light matter in those days, as the penance entailed must have made Sir Eustace recognise ruefully! Some three centuries later Stratfieldsaye was bought by Sir William Pitt. The Pitts were a Dorset family, though more than one was connected with Hants. Christopher Pitt, the poet, was a Wykehamist, and kinsman of George Pitt of Stratfieldsaye, whose son became first Baron Rivers. Swallowfield, a Berkshire manor just beyond Riseley, as well as Abbots Ann, was bought by General "Diamond" Pitt, grandfather of the "Great Commoner." The second Lord Rivers sold the Stratfieldsaye estate in 1814 to the nation, for a gift to the Duke of Wellington, held, like Blenheim, by the payment of a tenure flag to be sent to Windsor on the anniversary of Waterloo.

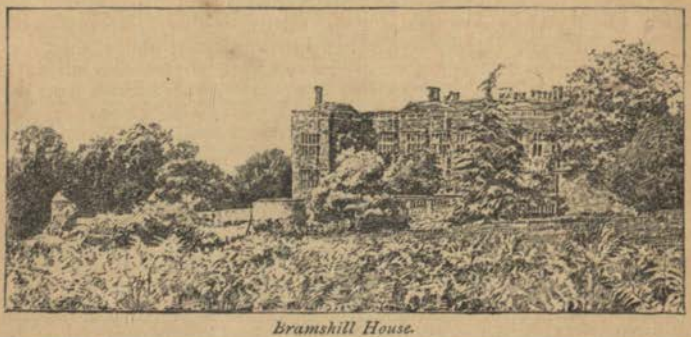
The lord of the manor of Sherfield Loddon, two miles to the south-west, held his lands on quainter tenure in old days than the gift of a flag, for he was responsible that order was kept among the king's laundresses! The village straggles round a long strip of common, where grey geese stalk in solemn procession to the big pond, and the white goal posts even in summer proclaim the favourite pastime of the village youths. It has the air of a quiet and prosperous little place, as immune from worries as it is apart from the bustling centres of modern life. The road, which has turned and twisted all the way from Riseley, passes on over somewhat higher ground before at Four Lanes End you may make for Bramley, Basingstoke, or Basing. Pretty country and a pretty

road, and the hedges are Hampshire's own, very different to the clipped and dusty ones that border the London road. This highway, though good enough for traffic, from Hook and Hartley Row has little to delay the wayfarer.

> "At Hartley Row the foaming bit we prest,
> While the fat landlord welcom'd every guest"

in the old coaching days, when this scattered village of inns, with its spacious roadway and plentiful stabling, grew up along the great western coach route. James I on his way to Andover, dined at Hartfordbridge, a mile further on, and ate fruit sent from Bramshill, before he continued the journey to Basing House, where he spent the night. Bramshill, according to tradition, was the first place in England where the Scotch king planted a fir tree, the "gnarled giants" Kingsley wrote of. Now, for miles around, seedling firs are everywhere, by the beeches on the higher land, among the gorse of the commons, and the reeds of water-logged heaths.

The Saxon manor of Bromselle was one of those given to the great Hugh de Port. The Foxleys, its next owners, built a



Bramshill House.

chapel and emparked 5,500 acres, and in the cellars of the present mansion are said to be some remains of their manor house. After many changes the estates were sold in 1605 to Edward, Lord Zouche. The house, considered to be one of the very finest of Jacobean mansions, was designed by John Thorpe, the story goes, for Prince Henry, eldest son of James I. A royally beautiful house it is, though the prince never lived to see its completion. Nor is the house alone beautiful.

"Be pleased, great Lord, when underneath the shades
Of your delightful Bramshill, when the Spring
Her flowers for gentle blasts with zephyrs trades,
Once more to hear a silly shepherd sing"

wrote William Browne in his *Shepherd's Pipe*, and soothly spring comes to few corners so fair as "delightful Bramshill" can show. The fine timber in the park, the bracken-clad sweeps, the gardens, the views over moorland and vale, all go to the sum of its perfections, in addition to the fine Renaissance work, and the stone fretwork of the parapet set like a crown above the south-west front.

With secret doors and sliding panels in its beautiful rooms, small wonder that Bramshill claims, like Marwell, to have been the scene of the Mistletoe Bough tragedy. A ghost in bridal garments visits the "Flower-de-luce" room, but, here also, the chest has been removed! The tragedy that took place in the park, though, is a matter of history. Soon after the house was built, George Abbott, Archbishop of Canterbury, when a guest of Lord Zouche, shot a keeper. Kingsley realistically pictures his ancestor's misadventure—

"I could fancy the deer sweeping by, and the rattle of the cross-bow, and the white splinters sparkling off the fated tree as the bolt glanced and turned—and then the death shriek, and the stagger, and the heavy fall of the sturdy forester—and the bow dropping from the old man's hands, and the blood sinking to his heart in one chilling rush, and his glorious features collapsing into that look of changeless and rigid sorrow, which haunted me in the portrait upon the wall in childhood."[1]

One quotes Kingsley here as a matter of course, for was not that militant exponent of sturdy Protestantism ordained to the curacy of Eversley in 1842? Two years later, after a brief absence, he returned as Rector. The peat bogs have diminished and the houses increased mightily in numbers since he wrote in the "thatched cottage" at the corner of the Green. Lines of gravelled road cut through the heather, and the stranger wanders by new villas and possibly misses the lane that turns up to Bramshill past the little church. Alongside is the Rectory, that with Kingsley's advent "soon became a centre to inquiring spirits," while the versatile Rector was "administering his parish with enthusiasm, . . . writing, reading, fishing, walking, preaching, talking, with a twenty-

[1] *Charles Kingsley. His Letters and Memories of His Life.*

parson power." Again and again we find Hampshire and the breeziness of the untamed moor that lay by his Hampshire home in his writings—

> "Give me Bramshill Common
> (St. John's harriers by)
> . . . . .
> Show me life and progress,
> Beauty, health and man;
> Houses fair, trim gardens,
> Turn where'er I can."

"Trim gardens" certainly abound, and "houses fair" are not lacking, though very, very many that "life and progress" have caused to upspring in the north-east of Hampshire can by no manner of means claim that qualification! Row upon row of houses are now wedged in between the plains below Cæsar's Camp and the stretch of open heath over which the London road runs for four lonely miles. It would seem in a measure that Hartford Bridge Flats need championing, for unfavourable adjectives have been openly applied to that breezy moorland tract. But once the writer spent an autumn on the edge of the Flats, and the spell they laid is unbreakable. Every day, wet or fine, as a respite from Blue Books and other fearsome documents, there were fresh beauties and diamond-clear air for the seeking. Many and many a wintry sunset have I watched from the clump of firs half-way over, what time my little companion "Cuckoo," a Scotch tyke, valiantly hunted imaginary rabbits—only to bolt back in a frenzy of terror should any dog appear on the scenes with warlike air, or a tramp suddenly emerge from a gorse-bush. Slowly the distances would deepen in blue, the purples of the heather merge into the shadows of bordering trees, and the fine group which arch across the yellow roadway stand out in indigo shadow against the orange and red of the western sky. It almost seemed as though the slanting beams of the swift-sinking sun lingered in rosy radiance on their wonderful trunks, as if loth to depart from aught so beautiful. More than three years elapsed before I again crossed to Hartfordbridge, and then the glory had indeed departed. The gold and brown of gorse and bracken, the purple wonder of the heather, had been wiped out by a fiery scourge, and only blackened stumps showed between the network of grey

ash-strewn pathways. The day added to the gloom of the scene, for heavy banks of inky-blue cloud rolled southwards, inky-blue also the distances, and the circling woods stood out mirkily against the skyline. Only a few charred sticks rose melancholiwise from the scorched earth where the firs stood sentinel, the rich tones of their rough bark dimmed to a drabness that equalled the ruin around them. . . .

The heathery spaces grow less yearly, the very moorlands are being tamed and trimmed, until the developments of recent years bid fair to stultify the reason for which the heather-clad wilds of this district were first invaded as "a practice ground" for war. After all, it is only within the last century that this corner of the county has been intimately concerned with war at all, and what are ten decades in Hampshire's story? Less time ago than that, if tales be true, the heathy solitudes near the little village of Aldershot were sought by a rich and angry father, whose only child had set her affections on a youth possessed of no gold but what adorned his tunic, as a place where neither sight nor sound of war and soldiers might penetrate!

Before the Camp of Exercise was formed on Chobham Ridge in the fifties, the only connection with war in the corner where Hants, Berks., and Surrey meet was the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. It seemed at one time likely that the College would be on Hampshire's soil instead of her neighbour's, for two years after it was started in temporary buildings at Great Marlow the King's House at Winchester was suggested for permanent quarters. But the building was reported to be "filthy and full of vermin," legacies of the French and Spanish prisoners herded there as at Porchester and so many other places, and the cost of putting it in order was estimated at £19,560. Again in 1806 the scheme was reconsidered; but five years previously, when plans for the College were first discussed, Pitt sold the Sandhurst site to the Government, one of the advantages it was stated to possess being "the vicinity of water carriage by the Basingstoke Canal"!

To attempt to tell the story of Aldershot Camp, though it has existed but half a century, is not here possible, for the story of its evolution is one of continual change, shift—and make-shift! In other words it is part of the history of the British Army. Moore had proved at Shorncliffe, and after-

wards in the Peninsula, what practical training would do for British troops. But during the fatuous days of peace and exhaustion that followed Waterloo the lessons of the Napoleonic wars were ridiculed or forgotten in great measure, and neither officers nor men were given opportunity to fit themselves for the parts they would be called on to play at an outbreak of hostilities. True the Great Duke never ceased to urge that the safeguarding of the nation demanded adequate attention when peace permitted preparations that might go far to *prevent* future war—a method of national insurance that those who play for the moment only invariably ignore. Meanwhile the Army had become a thing of no importance, and the veteran himself was openly scoffed at, and said to be in his dotage by politicians wise in their own conceits. Then came the bolt from the blue—the Crimean war. England, neither for the first nor last time, awoke to the fact that her Army was in no condition to fight. The Aldershot Camp thereafter made became a permanent institution. We know now how greatly the nation is indebted for this training ground to the efforts of the Prince Consort and the late Duke of Cambridge.

Two years before the Allies faced Todleben behind his Sebastopol defences after the Alma, Arthur Wellesley, Prince —and lesser titles galore—but to all time the Great Duke, had passed away.

"Do we always remember that it was by hard work, in peace as well as in war, by devotion to duty in its highest sense, by doing whatsoever his hand found to do with all his might, that Wellington not only won his battles, but made his soldiers the most formidable in Europe?" . . .

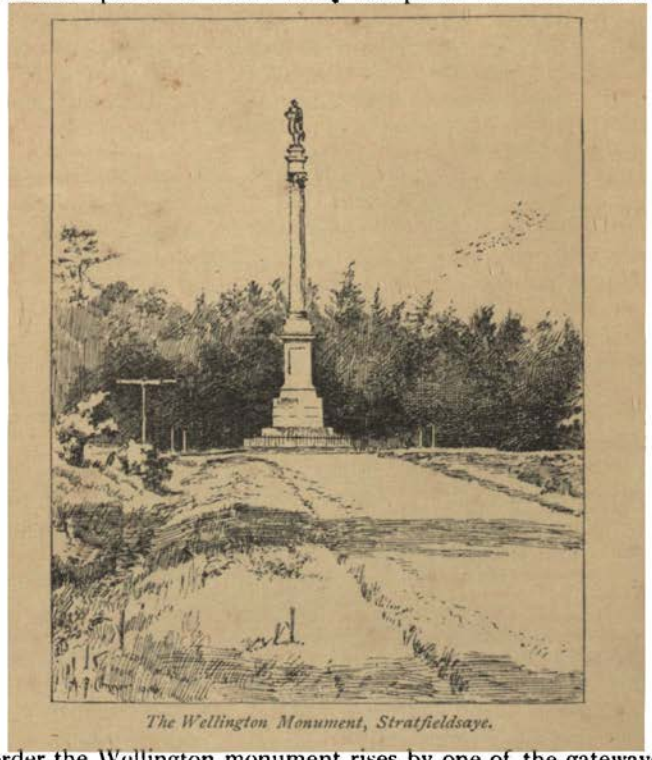
"He left to the army a special legacy. Throughout the whole of his career he had been the most obedient of subordinates. Loyalty to his superiors, whether statesmen or soldiers, was the first rule of his life."[1]

"He left to the army a special legacy."

The words are most true also of the writer, though words, to those who knew him, are inadequate at best. Colonel Henderson not only had some Hampshire blood in his veins, but for many years lived in the little village that borders the broad highway where it crosses the shallow boundary stream from whence it takes its name, Blackwater. There *Stonewall*

[1] Lt. Col. G. F. R. Henderson, C.B. *The Science of War.* Chap. v. "Notes on Wellington."

Jackson, that unsurpassed military biography, and the other books he left us—all too few—were written. So Hampshire may be honoured with his name on the roll of her writers. One of the Colonel's favourite expeditions was across the moorland spaces to where amid the pines on the northern



The Wellington Monument, Stratfieldsaye.

border the Wellington monument rises by one of the gateways to Stratfieldsaye.

"Every animal in the creation is sometimes allowed a holiday, excepting the Duke of Wellington," wrote the "Foremost captain of his time" in 1850. But Hampshire has memories that prove holidays, permitted or otherwise, were sometimes filched even in that busy life, for amongst the followers of the Vine the most noteworthy was the great Duke,

an enthusiastic supporter if no great performer in the field. Whenever he was at Stratfieldsaye, his spare figure in "plain scarlet frock-coat, a lilac silk waistcoat, kid gloves . . . fustians and boots, which we call Wellingtons,"[1] would be out, and woebetide the keepers if the Stratfieldsaye coverts were ever drawn blank. That once occurred and the order was prompt, should a fox again be lacking every man of them would leave instanter!

"Few men get more falls in the course of the year than his Grace," wrote a contemporary. One fall is remembered to this day at Laverstoke, and an ash in the park, near the keeper's cottage, is pointed out as the tree which unhorsed the Duke, who had turned to speak to a friend, heedless of the projecting bough, and was swept from his saddle. A few aged people can recall those times, and one old villager had a tale to tell of a farmer in the neighbourhood who "didn't 'old with 'unting and such like," so gave orders to his men, when hounds were running in that direction, to prevent anyone riding over his land. The Duke was just about to put his horse at a fence when up ran a farm-hand and attempted to stop him. Wellington calmly jumped the boundary, and then, before riding on, turned and threw a half-crown to the astonished yokel. "'That's for you, my man,' 'e says, 'cos you obeyed your orders,' 'e said; '*'Cos you obeyed your orders*,' 'e did," repeated my old gossip solemnly, adding, "I knowed the man well, 'e was a 'oodman 'e was."

It is not generally known that one of Wellington's last acts concerned our county. In the last speech he ever made the Duke had advocated the re-organisation of the Militia. "We have never up to this moment maintained a proper peace establishment, that is the real truth. . . But what I desire—and I believe it is the most moderate that can be found—is that you should give us, in the first instance, the old constitutional peace establishment," he urged. On September 13, 1852, the Duke was at Walmer Castle and during the day rode over to Deal. That evening he appeared to be in his usual health.

"I have been expecting this for the last three or four days," he remarked when a letter from Mr. S. H. Walpole was handed to him, "it is Mr. Portal's appointment as Deputy

[1] *Sporting Magazine*, 1831.

Lieutenant. Send it up to my room, and I will sign it when I go to bed, as I am anxious he should have it at once."

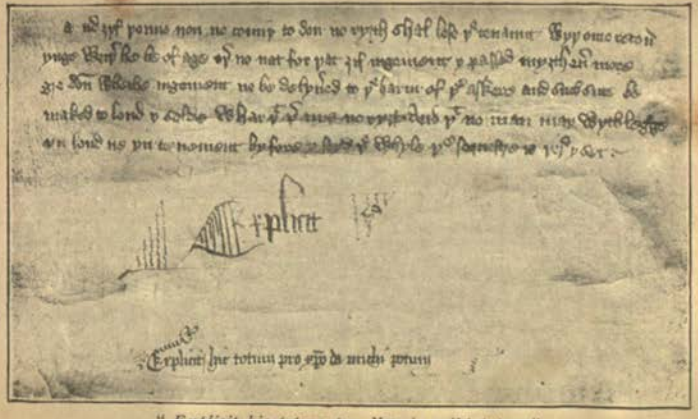
After the sudden seizure and collapse that within the next twenty-four hours laid low "the good gray head which all men knew," Walpole's letter was found on the table in his room, with this note appended

"Send to the Clerk of the Lieutenancy in the County of Hampshire and request him to send me the Commission immediately to be signed and sealed.

"Wellington."

These were the last words his hand ever penned, one of his very last conscious actions. So Hampshire's affairs, and her Militia, with which Mr. Melville Portal's appointment was concerned, claimed the final act of that great life.

END OF THE WINCHESTER CUSTOMAL.



"Explicit hic totum pro Xos da mihi potum."

HAMPSHIRE
English Miles
Railways
Principal Roads
Canals
BERKSHIRE
WILTSHIRE
DORSET
SURREY
SUSSEX
Salisbury
Winchester
Southampton
Portsmouth
Aldershot
Chichester
Bournemouth
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The Solent
Spithead
Salisbury Plain
Downs

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